

DEC 16 '52

# THE MONTH

DECEMBER 1952

**HOLLY AND THISTLE**

J. H. F. McEWEN

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J. B. MORTON

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# HOLLY AND THISTLE

By

J. H. F. McEWEN

SOME FORTY-ODD YEARS AGO a benighted traveller at Aberdeen suggested to a porter, it then being late December, that the cause of the delay in his journey might perhaps be attributable to the Christmas season. "Christmas!" replied the porter scornfully, "we pay no heed to they pagan festivals!" Such at that time was the view taken in Scotland generally not of Christmas alone, but indeed of all the great feasts of the Church. It was of course the outcome of the far more thorough extirpation of the Faith which took place in Scotland as compared to England at the time of the Reformation. Not that the work of the reformers in England was not radical enough. It was, most deplorably so. But at least it had the advantage of being, as it were, a home brew, and as such had a comparatively mild flavour. The resultant Anglican settlement had about it at any rate a faint suspicion of compromise. The words of the new Communion Service, though robbed of their meaning, were, for example, taken directly from the Mass; the altar, although again mainly as a piece of furniture, was retained, and in its traditional position. All of which things were to some extent conditioned by the structure of the buildings to which the new religion fell heir. The ordinary parish church, and still more the cathedral, with its whole design drawing the attention from every part to the one all-important focal point of the sanctuary and altar did not lend itself to what would now be called deviationist practices. Towards the altar, even although, as now was the case, it was deprived of all significance, every eye would nevertheless continue to turn no matter how many alternative attractions in the shape of pulpits and winged-eagle reading desks might be put in the way.

But in Scotland it was different. The edict that went forth decreeing the destruction of all that might remind a man of the rock wherefrom he was hewn came not from the mouth of any

kindly Scot but from that of John Calvin, the most pitiless of all calculating logicians. It was that iciest of blasts, the Genevan *bise*, which in so short a time was able to kill, almost to its very roots, the growth of so many centuries. Here there was no shadow of compromise: the pulpit replaced the altar—not infrequently *in situ*; images, organs, bells, stained-glass windows, flowers, vestments, all, were flung ruthlessly out of the door. The very altar-stones were broken up and in some places purposely made use of as paving stones at the entrance to the church where everyone would be compelled to tread them underfoot. And if the buildings were of themselves unsuitable to the new forms of worship let them be pulled down to make way for others that should be suitable! Or if they were cathedrals then they must be altered into conformity by walls dividing choir from nave as was done in many large churches such as St. Giles, Edinburgh and Melrose Abbey. But whereas it might be said of the English that they destroyed the old religion and did not realize they had, no such misapprehension can be imputed to the Scots. They were engaged in destroying the religion which then prevailed and were setting up an entirely new one in its place. "If you would be rid of the crows you must destroy their nests," shouted Knox to the rascal multitude at Perth, which then proceeded to show that it understood perfectly well what he meant. In Scotland therefore all went, including of course all the high days and holy days of the old calendar. Of these, Christmas proved, as might have been foreseen, the most resistant. It possessed, admittedly, many unfair advantages. It was the children's feast and it came at a time of year when the necessity for some jollification was particularly clamant. As a counter therefore to some of the attractions of Christmas the claims of New Year's Eve were extolled as a time of celebration, and New Year's Eve is still regarded as the Scottish feast *par excellence*. Up to quite recent times, until the price of liquor became prohibitive, the day was chiefly noted for its Bacchanalian orgies. In Glasgow and Edinburgh on those occasions, as is credibly related, the sober visitor would have difficulty in proceeding for any but short distances without tripping over the prostrate bodies of drunks lying on the pavement. The Children's Feast had been abolished with a vengeance!

But now we have it on the authority of an eminent Scottish divine, the Dean of the Thistle, Dr. Charles Warr, that in his

opinion "Christmas Day may soon supplant New Year's Day in the affections of the Scottish people."<sup>1</sup> He may well be right. The signs are not wanting, although they lean to the sorrier side as yet. Christmas is honoured rather as Mary Stuart is honoured in her native capital where, while her image by being extensively reproduced on postcards, boxes of shortbread, Edinburgh rock and so on is made to do yeoman service for the mercantile community, her statue may be looked for in vain. So, while honour is paid to Christmas the emphasis is on the secular rather than on the religious significance of the occasion. Good cheer is the order of the day rather than good news. Nevertheless these things are pointers, and as such not to be despised—not even the floor-walker in the department store exuding a spirit of vague benevolence from behind the cover of a red dressing-gown and some false whiskers. Not that the Scottish Christmas will ever resemble the English; or the German for that matter. We lack the necessary *Gemütlichkeit* for one thing, and some four hundred years of practice for another. For what more completely un-Scottish character could be conceived than, let us say, Mr. Pickwick; or how transport the high jinks at Dingley Dell to Charlies-hope! Still, having long ago been flung out of the door, Santa Claus is now somewhat obviously climbing back by the window. His exclusion could never be more than temporary in any event, and an unorthodox method of entry in his case is traditional. So in spite of religious animus and rival attractions, of Puritan disapproval and Presbyterian fears of the thin edge, of four centuries of contumely shading gradually into neglect, once more as Christmas comes round there gather in ever increasing numbers those outside the Catholic fold in Scotland who delight, as their forefathers did, to do honour to "the feast of friends."

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 20th December, 1950.

# ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

By

J. B. MORTON

ON JANUARY 2ND, in the year 1873, a daughter was born to the wife of a retired jeweller in the Norman town of Alençon. At the age of fifteen, by a Papal dispensation, she entered the Carmelite Convent in Lisieux. There, nine years later, after a long and painful illness, she died. In 1925, only twenty-eight years after her death, she was canonized by Pope Pius XI. "Our Mother Prioress," a Sister had once said, "will not find much to write about her in the obituary notice. Though she is very good, she has never done anything worth talking about."

I made my first visit to Lisieux more than a quarter of a century ago, three or four years after I had become a Catholic. I knew nothing of the story of Thérèse Martin; and there is little enough of that story to be learned from the smiling statue which is to be found in Catholic churches all over the world, or from the shrine at Lisieux, with its theatrical decorations. I was beginning to get the impression of a nun who would be bound to make a strong appeal to sentimental women. That gentle smile on the face of the statue suggests serene happiness, and I found it not difficult to imagine her untroubled existence in the Carmel, out of reach of temptation, shielded from conflict; an uneventful life of prayer and meditation and contemplation, without problems or difficulties. She would be a nun like so many others, conscientiously following the rule of her Order. But, at that point, there was a question to be answered. The Church does not canonize such nuns. What was the secret behind that smile? My companion at Lisieux, a man of robust character, a lover of song and laughter and jest, began to talk of her while we sat in a café after our lunch. He said: "It always amuses me that people who know nothing about her, think that they know what is going on in the world of our time. Her canonization was almost forced on the Pope by popular clamour." He told me enough of the



story to arouse my interest, and to make me realize that my picture of her must be completely false. I began to read about her, in a haphazard fashion, and at once I was amazed. What I was reading was a chronicle of heroic virtue. The smile on the face of the statue hides the secret which even the nuns of her community did not suspect, the secret which she disclosed, under obedience, in the *Histoire d'une Ame*.

One of the first things that strikes the reader of the story of St. Thérèse is that it is an unusual story. We are accustomed in hagiography to reading of one who lived amid ecstasies and visions and mystical experiences of every kind. We expect marvels. But such things were rare in her life. There were, in her childhood, the prophetic vision of her father's death, the last-minute reconciliation to the Church of the condemned criminal Pranzoni, and the vision of Our Lady which ended her mysterious sickness. In the Carmel she experienced a moment of ecstasy while making the Stations of the Cross. For the rest, she seemed to the community to be an exemplary nun, and no more. Another striking thing about the story is that she knew, towards the end of her life, the effect her teaching would have. In her humility, she disliked calling attention to herself, and asked only to fulfil her duties to the best of her ability; to be ignored or even despised. She said that answering promptly when you are summoned is more important than the writing of books about the Saints. And when, in 1894, the Prioress asked her, in what little spare time she had, to write about her early years, she feared that such a task would distract her from the rule of life which she had made for herself. But she obeyed. She wrote out her memories of her childhood at home and of her first years in the Carmel for the second of her sisters, who was then Prioress. In 1896, Mother Marie de Gonzague, who had been Prioress when St. Thérèse entered the convent, was re-elected. She asked that the autobiography should be completed, and the second part was written during the last illness. The third part was written for her eldest sister, Marie, Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart. The book was neither planned nor divided into chapters, and some of it was written when she was almost too weak to form the letters. When she had delivered the manuscript she showed no further interest in it. It was unread for some time, but she made no reference to it. It was an act of obedience performed.



The task was finished. Neither she nor her sisters had any thought of publication. But later on she knew that what she had written was of importance to the world outside the Carmel, and, a few weeks before her death, she was urging publication "after my death, without the least delay." Asked if she thought the book would benefit souls, she said, "Yes. It is a means which God will employ." She realized that the *Histoire d'une Ame* would play an important part in her mission, that mission of which she spoke to her sister at the end of her life: "To make the good God loved as I love Him, to give to souls my little way."

The book, which tells the story of her first years, of her life in the Carmel, and of her "little way" of love and self-denial, will be a disappointment to those who look for a work of great literary merit. It is the spontaneous and ingenuous outpouring of a soul. There is no literary artifice, no attempt to captivate by tricks of style. Its merit is in its content, and considering the conditions in which it was written, without time for shaping or revision, it is surprising that it can be read with such ease. The character it reveals is one of utter simplicity and indomitable courage and strength of mind. Those sayings of hers which are most treasured to-day are the simplest. He who finds something tedious in her insistence on her littleness and weakness is finding true humility tedious. All through the book she is giving herself as an example of man's powerlessness when relying solely on himself, and explaining that to rely on God as a child relies on its parents, is the only way to live as we are intended to live. The childishness of her language has frequently been criticized with impatience, but she always chose the simplest way of saying what she had to say, and it is what she said that is important. Some have been discouraged from enquiring into her life by this very simplicity of heart, and have found her style of writing difficult to digest without embarrassment. Let them be embarrassed, but let them read on. I myself suffer from this embarrassment, but it is a fault in me, not in her. I also, like many, have deplored the tawdriness of the decorations of her shrine at Lisieux, the sentimentality of the harp, the roses, the angels. But I remember Villon's mother, who is one of the earliest examples of a woman who "knew what she liked." The ballade her son made for her still to-day challenges intellectual pride. St. Thérèse is the people's saint, and her shrine is surrounded

by examples of the popular taste of her day. It is not the humble and the childlike who are repelled by the mawkish in art.

We must remember that, though she did not know it, while she was writing the story of her soul she was speaking to an audience of all races and all kinds of people. The directness of her style has the great advantage of making it impossible for her to be misunderstood. Some of her sayings could be put into a more literary form, but they would lose thereby. Nobody can read her book or her recorded sayings without realizing that she was highly intelligent, and had a sense of humour. But the last thing she wanted was to be "clever." Her dislike of drawing attention to herself was part of her humility. She once said this remarkable thing: "It would not disturb me if (to suppose what is impossible) God himself did not see my good actions. I love Him so much that I would like to give Him joy without His knowing who gave it. When He does know, He is, as it were, obliged to make some return. I should not like to give Him the trouble."

The family in the midst of which Thérèse Martin was brought up differed from other middle-class French families of the time only in the exemplary lives led by her parents, both of whom were extremely devout. Thérèse was the spoilt child. She was by nature affectionate, and her love of home and of her sisters was unusually strong. She was impulsive, not easily amenable to discipline, precociously intelligent, and extremely sensitive. A casual observer would have seen a pretty, vivacious child, happy by temperament, with a deep appreciation of the beauties of nature, and with a tendency to day-dreaming. These dreams, at a very early date, were not the usual reveries of a child. Beneath the surface of her life there was an undercurrent. Her vocation had come to her at an age when children are content to play their games. She had set her heart on becoming a Carmelite nun, and was confident that she could become a saint. The stubbornness with which she fought all opposition to her one overriding desire was the first indication of that iron will which was to become unbreakable during her nine years of perpetual warfare. Two of her elder sisters entered the Carmel at Lisieux. The eldest, Marie, discouraged her, reminding her that she was far too young to enter the convent. The Mother Prioress was of the same opinion. So was the Canon who represented the Bishop as

ecclesiastical superior of the Community. An interview with the Bishop himself produced only a promise that he would consider the matter. Both he and the Vicar-General had decided that she must have patience, and take time to prove that she had a true vocation. But patience, which she was to possess to an outstanding degree later in her life, was impossible to her now. She was utterly convinced that she must begin her work without delay. There remained one more resource: an appeal to the Pope himself. And to the Pope himself, during a pilgrimage to Rome with her father, she appealed.

An audience with Leo XIII was arranged for the pilgrims from her diocese. The Vicar-General of Bayeux, who led the pilgrimage, seems to have had an idea that the audacity of this little girl of fourteen might lead to an unusual scene. He therefore announced to the waiting group of pilgrims that on no account whatever must anyone address the Holy Father. But Thérèse, kneeling before the Pontiff, begged to be allowed to enter the Carmel next year, at the age of fifteen. The Vicar-General, standing by, explained to the Pope that her case was under consideration, which was a hint that her request was opposed by those who had examined the matter. Leo XIII could only advise her to await their decision. But she was not yet defeated. "If you, Holy Father," she said, "would give permission, the others would agree." "You shall enter if it is God's will," replied the Pope. Even then, she was about to speak further. She clung to the Pope's knees, and was finally led away in tears. On January 1st of the next year, 1888, she learned that the Bishop had given his permission for her to enter the Carmel that year.

So, at the age of fifteen, she left home and family, and abandoned the world. From the moment she crossed the threshold of the Carmel her physical and spiritual torment began. This was no surprise to her, since she already understood that there is no way to perfection but through suffering. Of a delicate constitution she had to accustom herself to unappetizing food, to intense suffering from cold, to lack of sleep. She was harshly treated and often rebuked by the Mother Prioress, and had to bear the small irritations inseparable from life in a community. She was under constant temptations against faith, was repeatedly attacked by dryness of spirit, and, asking nothing but to give herself completely to God, received no encouragement, no

response from Him. But, even in the worst trials, in the depths of her soul she was serene and confident, for she knew that God had called her, and she told herself that every tribulation was a proof that He was testing her trust in Him, and making trial of her love for Him. The more grievous the trial became, the more certain she was that she had a task to perform and that it must be performed at whatever cost to herself. From Holy Communion she received no consolation. "Is not this to be expected, since I do not desire to receive Our Lord for my own satisfaction, but to please Him?" She was ready to forgo spiritual consolation, because she had united her will to the will of God, and not only bore her sufferings patiently, but learned to rejoice in them. The more she was tried, the more that love of God increased, that fervour of self-sacrifice which refused to be discouraged.

But Thérèse had made up her mind to be something more than an exemplary nun. She had long wanted to be a Saint, and had said so with that complete candour of hers. She had once longed to emulate the spectacular Saints, to be a St. Joan or a St. Francis Xavier. But when she compared herself with them, she realized that their feats were beyond her power. Yet, she told herself, God does not inspire a desire such as this if it is impossible of fulfilment. Searching the Scriptures she was struck by the words, "Wherever is a little one, let him come unto me." On these words, and on similar texts, she based her doctrine of spiritual childhood, which, as Pope Pius XI said, "consists in thinking and acting under the influence of virtue, as a child feels and acts in the natural order." This was her Little Way, the method by which, in her own humble and unobtrusive fashion, she set about the task of attaining perfection, so far as it can be attained on this earth, and of so loving God that after death it should be her reward to bring souls to Him to the end of time. In a word, it is a system by which the teachings of the Church may be applied to the minutest details of the most uneventful existence. It is possible at a first reading of her own description of how she made this discovery to see nothing remarkable in what she set out to do. The obtuse may even ask, "What new teaching, what revolutionary idea had she discovered?" But the point of the story is that she discovered a very old teaching, something in danger of being forgotten. And the idea of becoming as little children may

certainly be called revolutionary in the present state of the world. Her Little Way was important enough to be examined and discussed by professional theologians, and Pope Pius XI believed that, if it were generally acted upon, it might bring Europe back to the Faith. He saw in the system which the Saint made for herself not merely an example to be followed by religious communities, but a cure for a sophisticated age. The full force of her teaching was timed to coincide with the despair of our day, and to confront the preposterous dogmas of the godless. She made old words fresh and living.

Dissatisfaction with herself and disappointment at her slow progress towards sanctification made her suspect that she had been relying too much upon herself. This led to her determination to become, spiritually, a little child, and to use the grace that God gave her to attain complete forgetfulness of self, by accepting, with love and confidence and humility, whatever came to her. This was no doctrine of quietism. Her love was a militant love, her confidence was vigilant against her own weakness, and her humility was a joyous, not a sad humility. So thoroughly did she understand and accept the necessity for suffering as a means of showing her love of God that, on the day of her profession, she had prayed to be granted martyrdom of soul and body. When this prayer was answered, so profound was the peace of mind which nothing could disturb that, in admitting to the Mother Prioress in the *Histoire d'une Ame*, that she had suffered much, she wrote, "You would have to know me thoroughly not to smile when you read these words, for has ever a soul been apparently less tried than mine?" It was a part of her charity and her humility to hide from the Sisters both her physical pain and her mental anguish. She was always cheerful, as though nothing was troubling her. Even when she had become seriously ill, she succeeded in hiding the fact from the Mother Prioress and from the nuns. Her only concern in this matter was that nobody should be distressed or even inconvenienced by what she was enduring.

As an illustration of the extent of her physical suffering we may take her confession that she was never adequately warm, and in the winter had often thought that she would die of cold. When she fell ill, she naturally became still more sensitive to cold. In the very worst weather a fire occasionally burned in the community room, and there was no other warmth anywhere in the



convent. But if she came here to warm herself, she had to face fifty yards of open cloister to return to her cell. At the end of a day in which she had carried out all her duties cheerfully, she would come, exhausted, sick and numbed with cold, back to the freezing cell for a few hours' rest. This torture of cold, which went on day and night, day and night, gives us, I think, some idea of her courage and singleness of purpose; especially when we remember that, shortly after she became ill she was assailed by those temptations against faith which were to continue for more than a year. But, far from being discouraged, she still accepted every new trial as evidence that she was being tested. From the test she emerged triumphant, and it is literally true that she loved God more and more the harder the struggle became, until, at the end of her life, she asked nothing but to suffer, in order that the profound joy in her soul might be evidence of her love, and that she might offer her tribulations to Him for souls in need. Only by making an effort of the imagination can the ordinary man or woman understand this paradox of agony welcomed with rejoicing which is the explanation of what a Saint is. "It is for us," she said, "to console Our Lord, not for Him to be always consoling us."

In mortal sickness and in dryness of spirit the Saint continued to carry out her duties, and, at the same time, to practise her system. Daily she sought opportunities for humiliating herself—for instance, by allowing herself to be unjustly rebuked. She forced herself to appear serene, and always courteous, and to let no word of complaint escape her, to exercise charity in secret, and to make self-denial the rule of her life. St. Teresa of Avila (whose teaching, with that of the Gospels and St. John of the Cross and the *Imitation of Christ*, she studied closely) warned her Carmelites against false humility. Not to believe that God is bestowing certain gifts is to lessen our love for Him. True humility consists in knowing that we, of ourselves, have no merit; but that humility should be accompanied by confidence and by a realization that God is using us as an instrument to do His work. True humility in one who leads a devout life, is not diffidence. St. Thérèse was in no danger of falling into this error. She knew very well what God would accomplish in her, as we see from the most famous of all her words: "*Ma mission va commencer, ma mission de faire aimer le bon Dieu. . . Je veux*

*passer mon ciel à faire du bien sur la terre. . .*" "He has done great things in me," she wrote once in a letter.

What Thérèse herself wrote of her "little way," and the examples she gave of it in practice, make quite clear that it is no mere counsel of perfection for nuns or for the excessively devout. It is a system simple enough to be easily understood by anybody. Yet it is obvious that even the most ardent soul could set itself no more difficult task than to imitate the Saint with any degree of success. But any Catholic, without the Saint's virtues of utter abandonment of self to the will of God, and her ever-active charity, could set his feet to-morrow on the path she followed to the end. He could not do what she did, but he could try to keep her counsel in mind. There never was any teaching, when once its meaning has been grasped, so free from obscurities and complications, or from the things that often alarm us and keep us away from the lives of the Saints. With that commonsense which is one of her most striking qualities, St. Thérèse devised a method of conduct which encourages us to be as simple and natural with God as is a child with its parents. Nothing is too small or insignificant to find its place in her system, and, for that reason, every hour of every day brings opportunities for applying it. What may look like a ridiculous triviality becomes a battle in a campaign, part of a pattern of planned strategy. A man going about his affairs in the world to-day can plead the impossibility of setting aside regular periods for recollection. He says his morning and evening prayers. He goes to Mass; perhaps, if he can fit it in, to Benediction. What else can he do? He has little chance, with his manifold cares and responsibilities, to get himself into a mental state in which he can think of more important things. For this man and millions like him, little acts of mortification and self-sacrifice are the answer. For it will be noticed that, in the many examples she gave of her "little way," there are many that can be transferred to the context of life in the world. Take her advice to the novices: "If, during any period of recreation, you are telling a sister something you think entertaining, and she interrupts to tell you something else, show yourself interested, even though her story may not interest you at all. Be careful also, not to resume what you were saying. . . . You have not sought to please yourself but others." There is a short sermon, crammed with commonsense, and made to fit the



club bore and his unwilling victim as closely as any two religious. Take, again, her words about suffering unjust rebukes in silence: "Having nothing to reproach myself with, I offer gladly to God this small injustice. Then, humbling myself, I think how easily I might have deserved the reproach." In many a good Catholic home children are brought up to practise self-denial and patience and charity, but how many remember the lessons and act on them when they grow up? The merit of her system is not that it is original, a new doctrine, but that it is a statement in elementary terms, of an old doctrine; a very lucid re-statement of the Church's teaching in the matter of humility. And her own life was an example of what can be achieved if God is loved enough. She showed that an accumulation of the smallest and most unspectacular actions is as good a use of God's grace as those more startling triumphs which are reserved for Saints of another kind.

The commonsense which I have spoken of as being one of the Saint's characteristics may be studied in her attitude to mortification and to prayer.

She began her life in the Carmel without questioning the tradition of mortification and penance which was at that time the rule. In fact, she admitted later that she had felt drawn to exaggerated asceticism. But as she observed the daily life in the Convent she began to doubt the wisdom of making certain forms of physical mortification the rule for a community, without taking into account the health, the temperament, the character of the individual. She herself fell ill after wearing an iron cross with points. The points wounded her. From that moment she began to clarify her ideas on mortification, and she came to the conclusion that it is absurd to expect that the torture of the body will have the same effect (in the development of holiness) on one person as on another. She realized that if the health is destroyed by violent penance, and one's daily duties thereby interfered with, then the penance is excessive, and defeats its own end. She continued to take the discipline, like all the other nuns, but she was careful not to attribute too much importance to this method of subduing the body. She said that for impetuous and ardent natures excessive mortification might be regarded as a temptation to be resisted, since it broke their health, and so prevented them from doing the work they were called to do. But she saw a graver danger. She held that an insis-

tence on the more violent forms of mortification might easily lead to self-satisfaction and complacency. A religious might come to believe that such practices were not only essential in themselves, but were inseparable from any system of self-perfection. As for herself, her mortifications were the acts of charity and self-sacrifice, most of them unnoticed, and even unsuspected by the Sisters, which she performed every day. But she never attempted to avoid the scourging, and the other forms of penance enjoined.

Her method of prayer, which, strictly speaking, was no method at all, is another illustration of her commonsense. She said, of course, the great, universal prayers of the Church. When God seemed to have turned away from her, and she could find no consolation, she said the Our Father and the Hail Mary very slowly, as nourishment for her soul. But from her earliest years she had found it difficult and unsatisfactory to read prayers in a book. They all seemed beautiful to her, as she wrote later, but there were so many that she could not say them all, and did not know which to choose. "So I act like a child who cannot read. I tell God quite simply all that I want to say." St. Thomas Aquinas says that in praying you can concentrate on the words you are saying, or better, on the sense of the words, or best of all, on Him to Whom you are praying. St. Thérèse had learned to talk to God in the most natural fashion at a very early age, and the habit remained with her. She prayed better when she composed her own prayers, or meditated. When she was a small child her elders noticed that she seldom followed the Mass in her missal. Someone would direct her attention to the right place on the page, but after a moment she would look up again, and lose the place. It was assumed that she was giving way to distractions, but what distracted her was the book. Without any training, without any understanding of such things, she was making a prayer of contemplation. Later, when distractions came to her as she prayed, she invented an ingenious method of making them serve her purpose. She prayed for the people the thought of whom was distracting her. "In this way they benefit by my distractions."

There are many people who find it difficult to concentrate their attention on set prayers, and they would probably say that this idea of an unpremeditated prayer is all very well for one whose whole life is a prayer. But a moment's consideration of the matter

will reveal something so obvious that it is difficult not to overlook it. The undeniable truth is that anyone, anywhere, at any time can accustom himself to praying in this spontaneous fashion. Once more, it seems to me, this commonsense of St. Thérèse teaches a very simple lesson which is worth learning by ordinary men and women going about their business in the world. No special holiness is needed, no preparation, since it soon becomes a habit. It is invaluable advice to all who are too busy or too lazy to make a daily visit to a church, to all whose wills are too weak to combat the distractions which so often accompany the reading of long prayers. "Prayer," she said, "is, for me, an expression of love and gratitude in the midst of trial as in times of joy."

This having been said, it is important to point out that praise of St. Thérèse's way of praying is not intended to suggest that it is a better way than any other. Her distaste for set prayers was a personal matter, as was her distaste for extraordinary mortification. She condemned neither. She merely said that it is unreasonable to suppose that there is one road to perfection which must be trodden by everyone; she said that in religion, as in everything else, one is dealing with individuals, even in a community; that, outside the observance of the rule of an Order, one must allow for temperament and character. Far from even suggesting that her way was the best, she repeatedly said that it was intended as a kind of lift to Heaven for those who were too feeble to walk up the stairs.

It was in 1896, on the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday, that the presentiment of her childhood that she would die young became a certainty. A bloodstained handkerchief warned her that she was gravely ill. Her first thought was one of joy, her second, a determination that she must conceal her illness as much as possible. On Good Friday, and on the days that followed, she carried out all her duties with her customary cheerfulness. It was noticed that she was paler than usual, but even the Prioress, whom she had told of her hæmorrhage, was deceived into underestimating the seriousness of her malady. But Thérèse, though she could smile and disguise her fatigue and weakness, could not conceal her coughing. A doctor was summoned, and for a few weeks she was better. In the damp and cold of the winter of 1896-1897 she grew weaker, and the doctor

gave up hope of curing her. And then began that slow death which can be read in all its edifying details in Monseigneur Laveille's biography of the Saint. She asked to remain in her cell, rather than move to the less uncomfortable infirmary, so that her coughing might not disturb anyone, and so that her suffering might not be lessened. A Sister who found her walking slowly and painfully in the convent garden instead of resting, was told that she was walking for some weary missionary priest in a far land, and offering her pain and weakness to God, in order that the priest might be strengthened. On another occasion, when the community was singing a hymn, she was too exhausted to rise to her feet. A Sister, not knowing how ill she was, signed to her to stand up. She stood up at once, and remained on her feet until the hymn was over. Never did she miss a chance of following her little way; not even though, at this time, she was battling with her worst temptations against faith. We are reminded of her prayer that she might suffer martyrdom of soul and body as we read of the increasing physical and mental torment to which she was submitted. One is tempted, and the temptation must be resisted, to say, "Surely she had earned an easier death," and it sounds paradoxical to say that, on the contrary, she had earned this kind of death. Day by day her pain increased. The doctor said, "Never have I seen anybody suffer so intensely with such an expression of supernatural joy. She was not made for this world." Day by day, not only was consolation withheld, but her soul was assaulted, and she had to fight all the time. After the middle of August, with her death six weeks distant, she could not even receive Holy Communion. As she lay gasping for breath and drenched in sweat, she thought of "All the good I wish to do after my death." On August 28th she said to the Prioress, "My soul is in darkness. Yet I am at peace." The time came when she could hardly make the least movement in her bed, so great was her weakness. Yet it was not until September 29th that the end seemed to have come. The prayers for the dying were read. But the agony continued through the day and the night and the next day. She died shortly after seven o'clock on the evening of September 30th. Her last words were "My God, I love Thee."

Her body was taken to the cemetery, with but a small procession following after. All that the townspeople knew was that

a Carmelite nun had died and was being buried. A few days afterwards visitors to the cemetery were surprised to see, carved on the cross of wood which bore her name, the words: *Je veux passer mon ciel à faire du bien sur la terre*. In October 1898 her secret was given to the world, her autobiography was published, and what followed is well known. People everywhere had discovered a Saint for to-day, one whose teaching contained nothing difficult to understand, whose precepts might be followed, however clumsily and imperfectly, by anyone who believed in God. The fame of her miracles and of her interventions on earth spread far and wide. She had said: "Would God give me this ever-growing desire to do good on earth after my death unless He wished me to fulfil it? No. He would give me rather the longing to take my repose in Himself." Her mission, as she had foretold, began immediately after death, and her words, and the amazing story of her brief life travelled across the world. More and more people discovered that she had spoken not only to Carmelite nuns, not only to the devout, but to the unhappy everywhere, to those burdened with sin, to those tempted to despair. She brought—she brings to all hope and confidence. She is the answer to the man who thinks that the enclosed life is a life wasted and misdirected in the world of to-day; to him who doubts or denies the power of prayer. She herself once expressed astonishment that there could be atheists, and her own life, as one studies it, helps one to share that astonishment.

# CAROLINE RECUSANTS

By

BASIL FITZGIBBON

THE DIVISION OF HISTORY into periods, which inevitably become the subjects of specialized study by historians, and notably by the masters among them, has disadvantages which are only too apparent. As in the case of all forms of the division of labour, these disadvantages are tolerated for the sake of the great advantages yielded, and it is to be feared only too easily, when and where thought and effort could lessen in great measure the extent of disadvantage. The workman is rarely at his best in the early and late stages of his task. He takes time to warm up to his point of high efficiency, and his energies flag with the preoccupations attending release from his labour. It is in their beginnings and endings that large periods tend to suffer at the hands of historical writers by a process of limitation inherent in nature.

The date 1603 has been a natural turning point at which our historians have elected to conclude or to begin their labours in relay, with the end of one dynasty in a very long reign and the beginning of another. But this choice, however convenient, would seem one which has served as a great obstacle to the understanding of our history. Only too often have we been conscious, almost to the point of exasperation, of distraction from such scanty knowledge as has been afforded of what was happening in these eventful years by writers impatient to round off their labours with estimates of the era of Elizabeth or to press on to the conflicts of the Stuart Kings with the members of their Parliaments. These years are full of tension and intrigue in bitter competition for security, place and power, out of which emerged a politician, who engrossed in his person power on a scale perhaps unparalleled in our history, but who must be placed low in the list of our statesmen, so bare has he left us of indications as to how in his able discharge of administrative routine he related the pursuit of his own advantage to the general and future welfare



of his people and of their institutions. He was supreme in a generation of opportunists and a standing proof that administrative efficiency may appear to settle much and yet leave all unsettled. Yet through the decades which saw the decline of the old queen into the grave and the establishment of the new kings from over the border, life in the individual and the nation went on in incessant activity and steady development. In the present state of our knowledge of this period, however, there is little to explain how the late Elizabethans, who passed through the dark intrigues, the secret fears inspired by concern to provide for the future, created in themselves and in the Jacobean world around them the illusion that all happened as it must have happened in the best of all possible ways.

We need, perhaps, historians who would specialize in these lesser periods which span the greater periods into which it has been found convenient to divide our history. Much might be done for the period of crisis caused by the need to secure the succession to the monarchy after Elizabeth, by adequate biographies of Essex and Cecil, and the study of the diplomacy which wound up the wars in an exhausted Europe. The mysterious Powder Plot is but one indication of the important contribution which we may expect may be made to the understanding of this period by the study of the history of the Catholic minority.

To some extent the work of Dr. David Mathew as a historian, though of its nature suggestive and tentative rather than aimed to promote close definition, has ministered to these ends. By stimulating interest in the whole pattern of society, by displaying its manifold complexity and its inevitable conservatism, he puts us on our guard against a too hasty acceptance of the clear-cut views of the political historian. His object has been, it would seem, to provide the period of his choice with a background against which we might set and re-assess the more familiar story of its politics. In his two recent books<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mathew enters further into the early Stuart period and into a close study of the social scene in the reign of Charles I, before the kingdom was plunged by politico-religious conflict into open civil war. The larger and more important book carries forward and greatly extends his survey of the previous reign in the Jacobean Age, and develops in more

<sup>1</sup> David Mathew, *The Age of Charles I* (Eyre and Spottiswoode 21s). *Sir Tobie Mathew* (Max Parrish 6s).



graceful form and with considerable amplification the enquiry set on foot in the Ford Lectures of 1948. Dr. Mathew has a most inquisitive eye for detail likely to illustrate almost every aspect of social life in this period, and his scrutiny, as befits an author whose experience has extended from service afloat to high diplomacy, ranges from the king and queen in the court to the men in the little ships, which put out to sea from English harbours, and to the agents who waited on the quays in foreign ports to deal with their business. Even where the reader finds himself inclined to question or mistrust Dr. Mathew's selection or interpretation of evidence, he cannot fail to find it a valuable experience to be allowed to share his immense zest for and curiosity about his subject and the benefit of his wide reading in its sources. It would seem that no attempt on quite this ambitious scale has ever been made to survey English life in the early Caroline age, and in any criticism allowance must be made for the difficulty of carrying out a pioneer enterprise of such magnitude. The author was certainly justified in making the attempt by his wide knowledge and lively interest in the period as well as by the careful planning which he has obviously put into his work. His courage and industry have been rewarded by a substantial success, which could probably not have been achieved by any other worker in the field.

It is clear, however, that historical work on this scale has its definite dangers and limitations. The discerning reader can hardly fail to notice that the narrative in points of descriptive detail, and in interpretations dependent upon it, often rests insecurely on single items of evidence, which have escaped being weighed and checked by other evidence. A glance at the index with its serried columns of single references will but confirm this impression. The author is doubtless more aware than anyone else could easily be that both his choice of evidence and the judgment resting thereon must frequently be tentative and subject to revision, and feels that he must leave it to the reader to bear this important consideration in mind, making the necessary reservations and qualifications, which, if inserted, would mar the easy flow of the narrative and hold up its progress. This weakness would appear to be noteworthy in the treatment of the distressful history of the Recusants in this period. In this case, at least, an explicit warning might have been given to the reader of the difficulties which here face the

historian. No tract in our national history is more obscure or less touched by the spirit and methods of modern historical enquiry. Dr. Mathew is acquainted with and makes some use of the account of the Chalcedon controversy provided in passing by Thomas Hughes in his large work on the history of the Jesuits in North America, which was based on a close study of some of the documentation available in Rome, especially in the archives of Propaganda. It is significant that he does not feel called upon to notice or use a longer account of the controversy by a more recent historian, which is partial and uncritical to a degree. This author ignored the work of Thomas Hughes on the subject, but dismissed as based on legend the account given in his *History of the Popes* by Pastor, who clearly acknowledges his dependence on the American historian.

Dr. Bavant, a Marian secular priest of high standing owing to his close friendship with Cardinal Allen and his long experience of work in England, made in 1610 a dispassionate and detailed analysis of the dangers which would threaten the Church in England if the Appellant faction should ever be placed in a position to carry out their programme for the mission. He was writing, as he knew, at a moment when Dr. Richard Smith was conducting in person a determined agitation to this end at Rome. In Bavant's sober view, such an event was clearly fraught with the danger of "a new war, between bishops and patrons" and with the prospect that "all this holy enterprise which we have in hand will collapse, to the exceeding joy of our adversaries." If under Charles I a greater measure of devastation than it had ever been in the power of governments to inflict during more than fifty years of bitter and sustained persecution was averted from the English mission, it was only by the resolute action taken by the leaders among the laity in appealing to the Pope to restrain the Appellant leaders, who had been appointed in Rome to bear authority over them, and by the prompt action taken at Rome in response to this appeal. This heroic generation of Recusants, clergy and laity, had had only too many opportunities during three decades of taking stock of the agitation and intrigues conducted in their usurped name by the small faction of the Appellants, whether in England under the ill-concealed and benevolent patronage of their persecutors or abroad out of all contact with the realities of the situation of the Church in England. It speaks volumes for

their high spirit of loyalty and charity that familiar as they were with the plans of this faction, they laid aside their most reasonable fears and resentments, and generously showed every disposition to co-operate with its leaders, whom the Popes had been unwise enough to appoint to be their bishops.

It must, too, in prospect have appeared to them improbable that bishops arriving to minister to a still persecuted flock, compelled still to cover the practice of religion with all the precautions of an underground movement, would give priority in the discharge of their pastoral duty to the introduction of canonical reforms, which paid little regard to the existence of an oppressive penal code standing unaltered in one phrase or comma in the Statutes. Some of these provisions appeared only too likely to expose lives and fortunes to dangerous publicity and to serve as labour-saving devices to hordes of informers who battened in elaborate rackets on the hapless state of the Recusants. If informers of Elizabethan type were now hardly found in attendance on ministers and high officials, as Dr. Mathew rightly states, this was not because the tribe had disappeared; they had merely set up a flourishing business on their own account in the extortion of blackmail and depredations on the property of the unprotected Catholics, whose only remedy lay in cumbrous appeals to the royal clemency. Indeed the value of the informer as a source of intelligence had long been in decline since the Ministers had taken under their patronage the Appellant faction, and the services of the men who exercised this vile trade were henceforth employed in increasing measure by the politicians opposed to the Crown, as a means of embarrassing, degrading and ruining the king in the exercise of his prerogative.

Dr. Mathew speaks of "the parochial clergy" in England, but the only shelter available for priests and for the facilities of Catholic worship, outside the foreign embassies, was freely, generously and at great personal risk afforded by the laity in the privacy of their homes. The life of an English priest ordained abroad and discovered on English soil was forfeit, as were the life and goods of any layman, who in any form ministered to his material needs. In a long and bitter struggle for survival, it had become a second nature to the Recusants to screen from observation their practice of religion with every precaution and device which ingenuity could suggest. It was a point of honour, which

was often put to hard test, for the priest to protect his host, and the host his priest. Though hopes ran high of some measure of relief in the early years of Charles I after the French match, persecution was still being generally experienced, and once, in 1625, in as severe a flurry as men could recall. Such being the situation, it was difficult to understand that there would or could be any urgent need to abrogate the long-standing arrangements made by the Pope to secure the distribution of faculties to the missionary priests sent to land and to work secretly in England from the pontifical seminaries and religious houses on the Continent. Such a step was bound to cause anxiety and perplexity when it became apparent that it had been taken without consultation with the Pope, the Cardinal Protector and their delegates, who continued to use the means of serving the English Catholics, which had been proved by experience and appeared still necessary in their eyes. The Appellants had conducted their agitation by promoting division among the Catholics at every discoverable point and had made no secret of a ruthless plan to procure the expulsion or withdrawal from England of the missionary priests, who had stood aloof from their claims to leadership. It was notorious that Protestant politicians, lay and clerical, had long and assiduously laboured at the same lines of cleavage, and to this end had established close relations with the Appellant faction. The main body of the English Recusants, seasoned in conflict and in awareness of the immense power of heroic co-operation, assessed this development for what it was, a most formidable penetration of their defences by the enemy, and on a front where they could not command adequate means of defence. Intelligence about Catholics afforded to the persecutors by Catholics was obviously far more valuable than the intelligence provided by spies. There was little point in wasting money on spies if Appellant leaders were willing to draw up lists of priests who had recently entered England. It was clear, too, that calumny and detraction of Catholics by Catholics had a destructive power and effective range exceeding anything which the most determined and able Protestant adversaries could touch. If Gilbert Gifford's tentative effort of 1586 was too gross for Walsingham's taste, Appellant writers provided, after little more than a decade, a spate of defamatory books, which the Bishop of London as agent for the Government found most satisfactory, and was glad to arrange should be

published by the London printers. In 1602 they published a translation of Pasquier's *Jesuites Cathechisme*, which was stuffed with the vilest calumnies, as offensive to the English Catholics as to the Holy See. It was provided with a long preface addressed to the English Catholics in the name of the secular priests of England, which avowed not only the responsibility of Catholics for its production but their defiance of the censures of the Pope laid upon Catholics who indulged in these and similar forms of collaboration with the heretics to the injury of the Catholic cause. The London printer had provided appropriately enough a decorated capital, which displays an archer shooting the tiara off the head of a Pope.

It was matter of common knowledge and experience among Catholics and Protestants that Catholics had been and might be even more their own greatest enemies. It must also have been widely known among the Catholics of England that the Pope in appointing the new bishops to rule in England had, through his Nuncio, laid upon them a care above all to promote and guard concord and unity in their flock. The stranger in England could stare long and earnestly at the face of society without finding any sign of the existence of the Catholic Church, and often found his only means of contact with it through the Catholics who had been exposed and confined in the public prisons. The Church had been preserved and was maintained as an underground resistance movement in the hearts and homes of the people in a network of secret and personal loyalties, established on the lessons of hard experience and the closest co-operation between clergy and laity in the highest spirit of comradeship. The extension of the much-needed but proscribed authority of a proscribed bishop into the loose organization of a proscribed Church was a task calling for patience and diplomacy in a high degree. Even if the hopes of the Catholics were realized that persecution under the Penal Laws would be steadily relaxed, it was obviously a matter of great delicacy, unfit for hasty decision, to relate the organization of a persecuted Church, sheltered in the houses of the laity, to canons defining episcopal rights over persons and property in the normal conditions obtaining in Catholic countries.

Loyalty was displayed among the Recusants of the seventeenth century at a level as high as has been seen at any time among the English, whether in refusing after the Gunpowder Plot an oath



of allegiance to their king, which was intended to involve them between denial of their religion and the cost of long and bitter persecution, or in the generous service of their lives and fortunes, which they gave to the king at much greater risk than their comrades during the Civil War in a record which leads to the touching and splendid story of Boscobel. It may be noted in passing that the device of the Oath of Allegiance arose from and was promoted by Appellant intrigues with Protestant politicians and that it was a rump of Bishop Smith's most violent partisans in the Chapter, who sought in his despite, to negotiate with Cromwell. Dr. Mathew in some comments and interpretations, which touch upon the troubled and eventful history of the Catholics in this period, appears to accept and follow far too readily the bold Appellant tradition that the flock failed the bishop, and the bishop not at all the flock. None of the would-be defenders of Bishop Smith have ventured to suggest, still less to prove, that he was clearly endowed with any of the qualities needed for his difficult and highly responsible task. It does not even appear that he viewed his task as difficult or was aware that in its discharge he had anything to learn or unlearn, though he had lived since boyhood abroad except for a short spell of a few years on the mission. He arrived in England after an absence of sixteen years, obviously preoccupied with the conduct from afar of a disastrous domestic feud of nearly thirty years standing, in which he had been a leading champion. The exigencies of controversy designed to promote his cause had possessed his mind with a conviction that vice and disorder abounded among the persecuted English Recusants and that adultery among the layfolk was almost as rampant as cupidity among the clergy. The bishop's mind appeared to be wholly closed to the realities of the precarious situation in which the still persecuted Catholics found themselves between the Court party round the king and queen, which from motives of humanity and policy would fain work towards a cautious extension of some measure of toleration to the Catholics and the men of the opposition, who would be tempted by policy and bigotry to exploit for political ends not merely any concession to relieve the plight of Catholic Englishmen but any failure to oppress them with the savage machinery of the law. Only too often and too soon in the years to come was the fate of priests, condemned to a cruel and disgraceful death on no other charge

but their priesthood, to be the subject of bitter debate on the floor of the House of Commons and a main means of testing party strength. It is suggestive that the Henry Morse, who appears in these pages as a layman relieved in his prison by Catholic doctors in 1635, is not identified as the Jesuit priest and martyr, in process of receiving reprieve after much negotiation from the sentence of death, which was carried out without further trial on his recapture in 1645.

There was only one course for the Catholics at this juncture, and it was as obvious as was old London Bridge as a means of crossing the Thames to a man unwilling to take to the water. It was vital for their own security and as their best contribution to the national welfare that Catholics should strain their every endeavour to show a united front in patience and peace and to gather and reserve their strength to prevent themselves being made mere helpless pawns in a mounting political conflict. Above all nothing should be done to discourage or embarrass a humane king in his attempt to extend protection towards his Catholic subjects or to invite attack from the Puritans by the spectacle of disunion in the Catholic body. There seems to be no evidence that Bishop Smith gave anxious, if indeed any, thought to the consequences of a course of action, which he should have seen would not only widely advertise his presence in England to provoke Puritan hostility, but would cause acute controversy and disunion in his flock. Even if there were a good deal of evidence to show that the bishop sought to play the part of a peacemaker and that he was obviously benevolent, candid and well-informed, it would still remain difficult to credit that the Recusants in England, who had given such strong proof of their loyalty to their religion and to one another through long years of persecution, surrendered themselves easily to rash and vain opposition to a bishop appointed by the Pope to rule over them. In the context of their experience, it was inevitable that they should think, and with good reason, that a brusque move on the part of the bishop to intrude a system of control through officials and correspondence over the secret chapels and chaplaincies maintained by them in their homes and to withdraw faculties from their chaplains pending recourse to the bishop or his officials, heralded an attempt to drive a considerable number of missionary priests out of England.



Such a project had been openly mooted for over twenty years by the Appellant faction in their incessant propaganda and in their secret dealings with the Government and had never been and was not now disavowed. If this design was particularly aimed at the Jesuits, it was not for what they had been or were on even an approximation to a balanced estimate of achievement and defect in their work for the cause of the Church in England, but for what they might conveniently be misrepresented to be in an intrigue which was intended to split the Catholic resistance. The Protestant politicians, unwilling to abandon their long struggle to crush the Catholics, held out vague hopes of their ability to negotiate some measure of toleration for "the better sort of Catholics," once they were brought firmly under Appellant leadership and were recovered on Gallican principles from the close dependence upon the Popes, who had hitherto supplied the authority and support vitally needed by the Recusants in their effort to revive and restore the Church in England. On their side the Appellants tended to recruit their party from men, who had lost, if they had ever shared, the enthusiasm of the Recusants for their cause, and whose chief study it was in increasing measure to find the means by which the Recusants might abandon the struggle, even at the price of considerable concessions. It was to be their part to lead their following into a promised land, which was bound to be and to remain a mirage if the essential task of finding means of checking the power of the Puritans in politics were neglected; but first, definite steps had to be taken to exclude from peaceful sojourn in or return to England of such of the Recusants, probably the vast majority, as the Protestant persecutor and the Appellants agreed to regard as "the worse sort of Catholics."

There was nothing new or subtle about this plan, and, as a piece of social engineering, it was without foundation in truth and justice. It was obvious as a warlike device and as old as any form of organization among the Recusants. It had been familiar to Walsingham and the Cecils and to all their agents and dupes as well as to Allen and Persons in their unwearied efforts to safeguard unity. It was in the mind of Ralph Sherwin for complete rejection, when in a last letter before crossing to England he took pains to send a message to the Jesuit General Aquaviva bidding him "take some consolation that we are all of one mind, one will

and one counsel in all things with the Fathers" and expressing a prayer, which was certainly heard, "that God would preserve him as long as possible for the good of England," and when in a last gesture he pressed his lips on the executioner's hand, stained with the blood of Campion. It was no less plainly before the mind of a comrade, William Gifford, to whom Sherwin sent messages of good cheer in this same letter, for dangerous acceptance, when six years later he excused his refusal of a passport sent by Walsingham to cover his crossing to England by the assurance that he could do better service to him by providing information about Douai College, by promoting mutiny among the students in the pontifical seminaries, and by working to set Allen and Persons at variance. It is in the pattern of these sharp contrasts, in their succession and continuity that is to be found the real interest, the high importance, and the truth about the story of the English Recusants.

Long years of experience in withstanding the efficient calculated pressure of persecution of an unprecedented modern type on their native soil did not of course purify the Recusants of all human frailty, but they did give them a firm hold of vital truths, which time was to show were fast becoming obscured in the Church at large. The superb initiative of their Douai leaders had provided them with the translation of the New Testament, which was smuggled into them at the perils of men's lives. The gospel brought to them the Lord's warning that a house divided against itself cannot stand, His deep concern for unity and charity in the little flock, whilst the Epistles rang with the preaching of the Apostles against the sowers of calumny, discord and schism among the Early Christians. As the records show, the priests who worked in their midst, and especially the leaders and martyrs among them, preached these fundamental truths with apostolic zeal by word and example. Practical day-to-day experience of a resistance movement in defence of their religion and the whole tradition about it inherited from their fathers taught them that a cause, which might ask and receive from them their all, could only survive and flourish in the measure of the co-operation achieved and maintained. In their struggle the English Catholics showed all the qualities which were to be characteristic of their nation in desperate and very long wars for survival, and who can feel so sure of his grasp of the inner pattern of

history as to be confident that they did not after all win the last battle?

It would seem wholly impossible to doubt the sincerity of the fear among the laity that the course upon which the bishop was precipitately embarking threatened disaster to the Church and to their peace and honour. It seemed to them intolerable that priests whom they had learned to know in the height of persecution as zealous and devoted missionaries should be forced to leave England in disgrace, and by a party of Catholics, who had a long record of collaboration with the persecutors. They were not willing to stand idle, when Catholics prepared to carry out in large part the policy which Burghley, Walsingham and Cecil had been unable to carry out with all the resources of a modern State, when they set out by executions and large-scale deportations to terrorize English priests from setting foot in their native land and English men and women from affording them food, shelter and clothing.

Dr. Mathew would then seem unjust in describing as Erastian the lay leaders of the Recusants, who in the face of violent obstruction from the bishop and his small following appealed to the Pope, and presumably the description would apply particularly to such among them as were "the strong supporters of the Society of Jesus." Still less would it appear correct to see in their action "a manifestation of distaste for a foreign and illegal jurisdiction." Such an interpretation of this conflict would alone seem bound to import the air of unreality, which Dr. Mathew finds, in the situation of Catholics who had grown accustomed to being described as Papists and adherents to Popery. If there is one fact which is certain about the Recusants in England as a body in this period it is that they had endured, and were enduring, much persecution for refusal to renounce the authority of the Pope. It is hardly less certain that the last men in England entitled to deny to others the right of appeal to the Pope were the men of the Appellant party, whose agitation over many years had been associated with appeal after appeal to authority in Rome, against orders given, and on some critical occasions with the connivance of the persecuting Government. Against Pastor's view that Dr. Smith was a Gallican, Dr. Mathew holds that "it seems more likely that he was a prelate attached to his own privileges and careless about protecting his own position." This judgment

would seem an understatement, when we consider that he led a most bitter and gross campaign of wild vilification of the English Recusants, which still does them grave injustice. He even took up after more than a decade the search to extend the complicity of the Catholics in the Gunpowder Plot, which had nagged with suspicious discomfort at Robert Cecil's mind until cut short by death, and the debris of his resumed enquiry still crops up in the most unexpected places. In a standard work of the highest scholarship by a great authority, the collection of authentic extracts to illustrate the life and career of William Shakespeare, is included a detailed cock-and-bull story of John Gerard's perambulation of the Catholic houses in Blackfriars in search of a committee-room, in which he might preside over a meeting of the Gunpowder Plotters. This story was gathered by the bishop and probably deceived few before it found a victim of great mark in Sir Edmund Chambers and also more recently in Dr. Leslie Hotson. Dr. Mathew does not make the traditional mystery of the Bishop's resignation of his bishopric and of its acceptance by the Pope. But if we are to form an adequate judgment of his attitude towards his position and its privileges, it would seem necessary to remember that Dr. Smith soon went back on this sound decision to resign, which alone could have safeguarded the dignity of his office, and he continued for over two decades in the face of every discouragement from Rome to act as if he were still a rightful bishop with territorial jurisdiction in any quarter where he could find acceptance of his claims. He was not spared the outbreak of bitter feuds in his own attenuated following, though he perhaps never knew that his Dean attempted to betray into the hands of Cromwell the Grand-Vicar whom he sent into England to quell some of his canons or that his monument in a foreign land was to be used to fling at his erstwhile and still persecuted flock the lying legend that he was "sold by his brethren."

The high interest and great importance of the English Recusants, whether in our national history or in the general history of the Church, is not sufficiently reflected in these pages and such a result is inevitable where the historian takes the Appellants as worthy claimants to the leadership and representation of their fellows, despite the deep-seated and intense differences which sundered them. On such an interpretation we are reduced to

thinking of the Recusants as a community living in remote aloofness and ineffectual isolation from the vital issues of their time, and devoured by insensate feuds. Yet it is possible to see in the Recusants a large body of most worthy men and women, and children too, who were the heirs of a determined movement to resist formidable persecution on a scale which had not been seen in Christendom since the days of the Primitive Christians, and which was only surpassed in the ordeal of their contemporaries, the new converts in Japan. They appealed to a high tradition of civilization which they shared with their fellow-countrymen, and were steadily discrediting and fighting to a standstill a bitter and sustained persecution by sheer courage, loyalty and resource. It was the Government, and not the Recusant women, who at length quailed after the gentle Mistress Anne Line was carried in a chair as an invalid to be hanged at Tyburn in 1601 for harbouring a priest, and the hanging of the Chorley weaver Wrenno in 1616 for relieving a priest in distant Lancashire had already all the air of a belated accident. It was only a matter of holding on, and Englishmen would sicken of the butchery of Catholic priests, as they had done of lay men and women. There were no martyrs in the decade 1618-1628, and high Government circles were almost apologetic when at Lancaster, in 1628, an outburst of local bigotry secured the execution of the Jesuit Arrowsmith for his priesthood and of the yeoman Herst on a bogus charge of murder. This untoward incident was followed by a pause of twelve years in the shedding of Catholic blood, until the meeting of the Long Parliament, which took its token toll of the lives of twenty-one priests, a degradation of public life which caused a deeper concern in men's minds than has been noticed by our historians.

Thoughtful men had indeed come to be exercised with a doubt whether after all the Catholics did not stand in the dead centre of English political tradition, between degrading and ineffectual dependence on obviously fallible princes and politicians in the matter of religion and an anarchical drift into the rejection of all authority, civil and religious. The highly intelligent and sensitive Falkland called the Jesuit Knott into secret conference with him, before he finally yielded to despair about religion and politics. It is significant that we owe our knowledge of this fact to Conn, the Papal envoy, because the Jesuit Provincial had prudently left the



ultimate decision and responsibility to him about yielding to an intrigue directed from Court with the support of sympathizers with Bishop Smith to force this very able priest out of the country. Again the complete reticence, which Dr. Mathew attributes to the lonely king in the matter of religion, has a significant exception in the long conversations on the subject recorded by Conn.

Though isolated and segregated in their first interests, the English Recusants were very much alive and alert, and abounded in spiritual energy. In numerous English manor-houses an intense Catholic life was led at a level which it would have been difficult to find in many a Continental parish or even religious house. No Catholic community was perhaps ever less troubled by false ideas about supposed differences between the standards of Christian perfection to be expected of clergy and laity, of the secular and of the regular clergy. Their ascetical literature was of high quality, astonishing in output and widely read, even among Protestants. A chaplain of one of the lay leaders, George, Earl of Shrewsbury, writing the day after his death in a private letter to a friend has left us a remarkable picture of his patron, obviously a man of high sanctity and a model Christian master, ruling "in a continual standing house of almost eighty persons in family" and extending his charity to the prisoners and distressed throughout the land. He died before his reputation could fall under the flail of Appellant hostility, unlike George Calvert, who had sacrificed a great career to become a Catholic, and who founded with his colony the Church in Maryland on the enlightened principle of toleration. He, too, was spared by death from the sight of the frustration by disunion of his hopes for the Church in the New World and the knowledge that he was defamed on the authority of Dr. Smith in Rome as a man lax enough to enter into a bigamous union at the instigation of a Jesuit. The woman named as his partner happened to be his first wife and the mother of his children, and she had been laid in her grave in St. Peter's, Cornhill, before Calvert became a Catholic and before the Jesuit in question, Fr. Knott, had left Rome for England.

But perhaps the most illustrious victim of the deluge of calumny, with which the Appellant party sought to overwhelm the English Recusants, was to be found among the women, in Mary Ward, that woman of genius, who had the clear vision of the immense field of work which lay open to dedicated women



if the forms of religious life were adapted to the urgent needs of changing modern conditions. In the history of the Church perhaps no body of women has so clearly earned the right to be heard and trusted by the Church than the Recusant women of England, who were in the forefront of the struggle to preserve and restore the Church. Out of the records shine many a Recusant woman's heroic or resourceful deed, the servant-girl who pushed Campion into the duck pond; Margaret Clitheroe, equally determined that in York City priests should be sheltered to say Mass and that a child should not be whipped to furnish evidence against her, though she be pressed to death; Margaret Ward, glad to risk and give her life to rescue a priest in danger of collapse from Topcliffe's own prison; Mary Habbington, with her husband in prison and she within a few days of delivery of the child she bore, tiptoeing through the darkness in the great warren of her home, swarming with armed guards, to pass the food through a quill, which might save the priests in the hiding-hole from starvation. The sisters and the daughters of such women went abroad to the religious houses in considerable numbers, but more wished to stay and work in England under some form of religious dedication. In Mary Ward they had a leader of outstanding capacity, who showed every promise in the light of fifty years of persecution of being able to contribute strong support to the Recusant women, and through them to the Church, not only in England but further afield. In Stuart England there was no public organization of the social activity of women, and it is difficult to see how persecuting governments could have countered the work of nuns discreetly dressed in their widow's weeds, living and working unobtrusively in the shelter of the manor-houses in which the memory of St. Thomas More and his Margaret was a cherished tradition, or in the crowded quarters of the towns, where Catholics tended to congregate for mutual support. But the resources of the State were hardly put to the test against this remarkable woman and her prophetic vision of what nuns might do in the modern world. The Appellant party saw to it that she was effectually thwarted and almost crushed by Catholics and within the Catholic Church, and to an extent which lay wholly beyond the power of the English State. What survived of her work in its worth is some measure of our loss, as is also perhaps the scale of the social evils, which awaited reform in the modern

age as a heritage of callousness in the ages during which religious faith grew cold, and which the release of a great reform movement among women worthy of the quality of the English Recusants might have arrested.

In our present anxieties we are deeply concerned about the foundations of the loyalty which a man owes to his fellows and to the society in which he lives. We have been extremely perplexed to find among our contemporaries men and women who appear to be completely devoid of this human attribute. The eminent lawyers who conducted the Royal Commission of enquiry into the suspects in the Canadian Spy Ring evidently found this problem of the highest importance and one which fascinated but baffled their interest. In this bewilderment, it has been inevitable that men should search the past for parallels. In the recent discussion of Mr. Moorehead's book about Nunn May, Fuchs and Pontecorvo, there has been a good deal of ill-informed reference to the English Recusants and to such leaders as Allen and Persons. The instinct was right which led men to this period, which was marked by subversive activity of the greatest interest and importance, but directed not against civil rulers by their subjects, but by Catholics inside the Catholic Church against the greatest achievement of the Counter-Reformation, the missions in Northern Europe and to the newly discovered continents from China to Peru. As we glance at our daily bulletins about the truce negotiations in Panmunjon, now in their second year of publication, we can hardly doubt that the destruction of the work founded by Ricci in China is one of the major and perhaps incomparable disasters of history. There is a very interesting treason among the clerks to be found in the seventeenth century, and not least among the English.

# PERCY LUBBOCK, O.M.<sup>1</sup>

By

DEREK STANFORD

THERE IS A DELIGHTFUL PICTURE of Mr. Lubbock facing page 144 of his own selection from the diaries of A. C. Benson, taken at Hinton Hall in 1906. It depicts a group of three figures: H. O. Sturgis (the friend of Henry James and author of that fine Edwardian novel, *Belchamber*), A. C. Benson, and Percy Lubbock himself. He is shown as leaning a little forward from his comfortable wicker-chair, listening, with one finger to his lips and a gleam of amusement behind his glasses to Benson genially holding forth. His longish dark hair suggests the young scholar, and the light ample suit in which he is dressed an easy yet proper informality. In all, the picture confirmed for me the image of the author I had created out of a study of his writing; for whereas it is Benson, in the reproduction, who holds the field like a born raconteur, it is to Lubbock that the eye returns, fascinated finally by his own attention. We feel that he, and not the speaker, is the one who has extracted the meaning from the story, has examined it beyond the cursory limits we give to some charming but ephemeral gossip, and so come to seize it in its pure distinction.

This last term "distinction" is the keyword to my essay, and under its light I wish to consider the mind and work of Mr. Lubbock.

But first, before proceeding, let me give a quick glance at some connotations which the keyword may assume when applied to the field of literature. Perhaps the two most important of these are those which suggest a fashionable elegance or a certain comeliness of style. Now both of these qualities are to be discovered right on the surface of Mr. Lubbock's writing. It possesses, to begin with, all the implications of what we to-day call a leisure-culture, the plain indice of its having been produced in an age more favourable to the graces than our own. This note

<sup>1</sup> Notice of Mr. Lubbock's award appeared in this year's Honours List.

of expansive and courteous procedure we may refer to, metaphorically, as Mr. Lubbock's Edwardian tone (metaphorically, since all his books came to be written after 1910). Apart from this suave urbanity of tone, which we may associate with the life of the English upper-classes before 1914, the subjects of his books have been taken very largely from the spheres of fashion and of leisure: Eton, the world of country-houses, of well-to-do socialites, and holidays abroad.

The second quality, comeliness of style, is in part related to the first, being, as it were, its appropriate speech. Like the subtle smoke of a long-extinct cigar, Mr. Lubbock's style preserves the illusion that things are with us which have since passed away. This magic is, no doubt, the more efficacious in that a social nostalgia, so often present when an author celebrates a lapsed way of life, is not discovered here. Nostalgia there is, as in his recollection of the summer-holiday home of his childhood, but this is of a private order like Proust's remembrance of the madeleine, and is not infused with any conscious communal or historical pathos.

In seeming, then, to speak with the voice of the choicest connoisseurs of the Nineteen-hundreds, even when his subject exists in the 'Twenties, Mr. Lubbock's style becomes an exception: what was, we may fancy, the high shining norm of utterance in other decades and milieus is transformed, in our own austere iron age, into a lonely rare phenomenon. How much this impression owes to Mr. Lubbock's sifted subject-matter and how much to his assimilation of the timbres of Pater and Henry James is something I shall not consider just now. Suffice it to say that he can be described—to employ Mr. Cyril Connolly's distinction—as a “mandarin” author, a master of English in its literary rather than vernacular form.

But both these by-products of the term in question fail to localize the kind of distinction which Mr. Lubbock has created for himself. They tell us something about the charm in which this property goes clad in his writings; something of the outward grace which it assumes but little of its own interior nature. For about the “fashionable elegance” and “comeliness of style” as here considered there hovers a period-piece attraction, an appeal that succeeds on account of its collective associations. If this were the sum of Mr. Lubbock's merits it would show him as a con-

formable author—as one whose nonconformity or uniqueness came of his writing outside of his true age within which he was really a representative figure. But the choiceness which Mr. Lubbock has to offer is altogether of a more selective nature: his contribution is personal.

Returning, then, to the term “distinction,” it is possible, I think, to find a third meaning which, while not excluding the other two implications, fits more closely the kind of virtue which we sense in this author’s writing. Briefly, the meaning is the one which derives directly from the root of the word, namely, *distinguere* (to distinguish); and applies in this case both to the precision of identity which the writer achieves in speaking of things and to his certainty in personal expression. Thus, when the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, amongst its definitions of the term, offers the three following ones: “point(s) constituting the difference between things” . . . “individuality as a merit in an artist,” and “becoming notable for merit,” we see how these three statements combine to serve as a description of Mr. Lubbock’s virtue.

This talent for exactly specifying, with shrewdness, sympathy, courtesy and insight, the qualities of people, books and places, is the one which links biographer and critic in his writing; and was the trait I fancied I recognized in the picture where he sits listening to Benson. To utterly absorb oneself in a subject, and from this absorption to carry away the hall-marking individual essence of it, yet in this suspension and forgetting of oneself never to relinquish the evaluative task—that appreciative but comparative sense: this is to be both biographer and critic; to act and do as Mr. Lubbock has done.

If one were unwise enough to try to sum up in philosophic language the workings of this author’s mind—so little given to generalization—the nearest probably that one could get to it would be Goethe, who maintained that the universal was best apprehended through the particular, or Duns Scotus with his powerful sense of the quiddity or selfhood of things. This, however, does not tell us much more than the statement that in Mr. Lubbock’s scheme of being individuality is the principal idea. The faculty for prizing and assessing this is what gives him his breadth of response and his interested accuracy at each point on this front. Unlike so many specialists in culture, Mr. Lubbock



is nothing of the intellectual snob. He savours and appreciates people outside their capacity as brain-machines, outside of their functioning as turbines of opinion. So, in his edition of A. C. Benson's diary, he is able, perfectly, to estimate his subject's flairs and flaws as a writer while appraising him splendidly as a person. "He was," writes Mr. Lubbock, "an artist of many talents, blessed or afflicted with a facility which he had not the weight to stem; he worked voraciously, with the lightness of hand of a craftsman, but with no tenacity, no faithful desire for perfection."

This is just, unswayed, and true; but does not prevent Mr. Lubbock from writing page after positive page in which he resuscitates his dead friend for us. Benson, he tells us, for example, "was much at the mercy of his politeness, constrained to make himself agreeable by a sort of doom of courtesy which he could not escape." "Much at the mercy of his politeness," and "doom of courtesy"—these tell us much. There is a kind of further refinement on the method of the "character" writers, from Theophrastus to La Bruyère, about these phrases. The depiction of a species' salient features is adapted to the limits of the individual, who forthwith becomes a species to himself.

The same holds good for his book on Edith Wharton. Knowing exactly the calibre and bore of this novelist's mind, and the products of it, he can yet write deeply, engagingly, upon her, making her of more consequence than her books.

A writer is a writer [Mr. Lubbock states, going on to develop a figure of speech by which he often softens yet fixes a judgment], when he not only knows a good friend in his work, but will rely on that friend, if need be, for company, for reassurance . . . Edith Wharton . . . never to that length confided herself to the friend in her work; she always had, she felt she had, to provide herself with everything else within reach. Well, I only mean, after all, that when she sat at her work she faced a companion whom she loved and trusted, but one who never was, never had the chance to be, all the comfort and cheer that she required.

Elsewhere, with exquisite devaluation, he speaks of "the merciless perfection of her surroundings," and how "Edith seemed always to like admonishing and edifying her garden rather than conversing with it." His sympathy, his courtesy never blunts, only graces, his feeling for the truth.



## II

Mr. Lubbock's chief books are five in number: *The Craft of Fiction* (1921), *Earlham* (1922), *Roman Pictures* (1923), *Shades of Eton* (1929), and *Portrait of Edith Wharton* (1947). He has also, amongst other work, edited *The Letters of Henry James* (1920), which last is of importance in understanding his intentions. For him, Henry James has always remained "the great master of cases and situations," the novelist as artist *par excellence*. From James' own theory and practice, he took as his criterion the latter's "point of view," as we shall see when considering *The Craft of Fiction*. Then, too, there was the influence of James' prose upon the formation of Mr. Lubbock's style—a fact already touched upon in passing. But what is perhaps of most significance is a statement he makes in his Introduction concerning the core of James' existence. "His life," he writes, "was no mere succession of facts, such as could be compiled and recorded by another hand; it was a densely knit cluster of emotions and memories, each one steeped in lights and colours thrown out by the rest, the whole making up a picture that no one but himself could dream of undertaking to paint."

Now this, in truncated and modified form could stand as the formula or *rationale* of Mr. Lubbock's writings on people and places. What he has been at pains to convey is not "a mere succession of facts" but "a densely knit cluster of emotions and memories," even though it meant "making up a picture" by one who was not its lawful subject.

This inobtrusive manifesto of intention is further elaborated in his Preface to the *Portrait of Edith Wharton* in which, in answer to the question "What kind of a book should it be?" he answers himself, "Certainly not a formal biography." Yet, he continues, "a design it must have," even if the theme be informally unwound, and even if the book must perforce show "the limitations of a single point of view." A record of subjective impressions, then, whether or not one be oneself the object, together with the care to give these impressions something of a not haphazard shape: such are the factors determining Mr. Lubbock's composition and achievement.

This occupation with design or shapeliness is voiced in the first of his books, *The Craft of Fiction*, in which he crusades for

the novel as an art. Written at a time when the theories of Roger Fry and Clive Bell were in the air, this book might be described as attempting to adapt the pictorial theory of "significant form" to the canvas of the novel.

"A book," writes Mr. Lubbock, "has a certain form, we all agree"; but how, he continues, can we come to know that form? For as we normally read a novel, we are aware of it "not as a single form . . . but as a moving stream of impressions, paid out of the volume in a slender thread as we turn the pages." How a story reaches most of us "is rather as a process, a passage of experience, than a thing of size and shape."

Against this predicament Mr. Lubbock proposes two remedies: firstly, that we learn to read creatively; secondly, that the novelist attempt to compose in a uniform manner, by consistently sticking to his given "point of view." The reader's task, as Mr. Lubbock sees it, is to resist the powerful feeling that a novel is a mere "tract of time," through which he is passing by turning the pages. He must try to comprehend what the author is about, and the means he uses to accomplish this intention. He must remember when approaching a work that the novel is "life liberated from the tangle of cross-purposes" which existence presents, and because of this he must make the effort to read the work *novelistically*, and not as a segment of unsifted experience. For life in a novel is different to life as we daily live it, in that it should be individually but consistently imagined, with nothing irrelevant about it, and somehow or other imbued with meaning. If we bear these requisites in mind, we immediately find ourselves in possession of a simple and direct measure of the novel: Are the incidents we read of imaginatively consistent and relevant, and do they, so to speak, precipitate a meaning?

Touching, next, upon the author's duty in this process of rendering the novel artistic, Mr. Lubbock follows faithfully in the wake of those two first great "shapers," Flaubert and Henry James. Along with the Frenchman he requires the writer's explicit abdication from the story ("The author in his work," wrote Flaubert, "ought to be like God in the universe, present everywhere but visible nowhere.") This means the complete removal of all those intrusive self-assertions so dear to the Victorian novelist, and manifest in sermons, much "philosophizing," and waggish or premonitory asides.

This step, however, is no more than a needful preliminary one. After this more obvious banishment of the author from his book, Mr. Lubbock urges that the story be seen through other than the novelist's own eyes. The author's business, he persuades us, "is to dramatize the seeing eye"; to let the action come to us through the sight and mind of one of his characters. This is to embody "the point of view," to implicate it with the other characters, instead of having it suspended in mid-air like a kind of invisible omniscient pupil (which, of course, is none other than the author's). For want of this internal "point of view" which creates a sort of "play within a play," Mr. Lubbock finds that in *Vanity Fair* "a potential value is wasted"; and as an instance of a novel in which it is superlatively employed he offers us *The Ambassadors*.

Indeed, we can say that Mr. Lubbock's "poetics" are taken from the practice of Henry James entire. According to him, the Master of Rye was the true midwife of the formal novel, being the exponent who attended at the birth of its germinated possibilities. His was "the discovery of the degree to which it may be enhanced dramatically," and although Mr. Lubbock speaks of the fresh departures James made possible, he does not concern himself with any such examples.

As Mr. Herbert Read has pointed out, the novel has never had its Aristotle, but as an analyser of fictional method (prior to the work of D. H. Lawrence, Wyndham Lewis, and James Joyce), Mr. Lubbock comes nearest to filling the bill.

His second book, *Earlham*, might be described as the biography of a house, the home of his grandparents at Colney in Norfolk, in which he spent his summer holidays in childhood. But this would make for insufficient indication; for *Earlham* is something more than the record of "a mere succession of facts" about a building. It is rather biography in terms of reminiscence—a kind of *recherche du temps perdu*.

Apart from the admirable gallery of portraits of all those people who once filled the house, his grandparents and former owners (re-created from family pictures and gossip), the house-keeper, butler, gardener, and others; apart from the evocative description of the place, and the excellent prose in which the book is written, *Earlham* is of consequence as an experiment in creative remembrance; as one of those works, like Proust's

masterpiece, which tells us more about the nature of time and memory than we knew before, and seems to offer the consolation of a purely temporal mysticism.

In *Roman Pictures*, Mr. Lubbock substituted a gently ironical form of portrait-painting for the plangent reconstructive brushwork of *Earlham*. Taken as a whole, the book can be described as a bland critique of human pretensions and a search for perfection and style in all its forms.

It opens with the narrator meeting a young English *poseur* in Rome, who promises to introduce him to the true contemporary heart of that city, "the real Rome" as the Romans know it, and not the collection of famous sites carefully selected by the guide-books. From this, there ensues a variety of fun, in the course of which we encounter a number of apparently "true Romans" who turn out to be anything but the real thing.

But *Roman Pictures* is chiefly of importance for the way in which the negative and positive note are counter-pointed. As represented by the ironical, the negative tone is here employed to dispose of the claims of pretence and affectation, whilst the positive note is used to celebrate those few persons who in some way or other satisfy the narrator's search for a genuine personal distinction. These few, it might be added, prove to be, not splendid exponents of the grand manner, but those who have declined to wear a mask; for—as I hinted earlier—Mr. Lubbock's concept of distinction is ultimately one of individuation.

In *Shades of Eton*, Mr. Lubbock mixes his irony and drawing-from-life in delectable proportions. In this book his irony sometimes takes the form of rhetorical caricature—a kind of veiled "mock heroic" manner—as in his portrait of Warre, headmaster of Eton in the 'Nineties. And, strangely, in these larger-than-life reproductions, in these inflated "to-scale" portraiture, the laudable and the laughable are somehow conveyed to us side by side.

What Mr. Lubbock achieves in this work is not a memoir of his old school as an institution of learning, nor yet as a nursery of civic leadership. Combining irony and criticism with affection, he gives us the atmosphere of Eton, a distilled description of the spirit of the place—an idyll on its own *genius loci*.

Of the *Portrait of Edith Wharton* I have already briefly spoken. Written many years after his other books, it has a good claim to be considered as its author's best and most mature work. Shrewder

and drier than the ever-popular *Earlham*, it gives us a picture of its subject—that charming, attractive, unlovable woman—in which deeper glints of human nature appear than in any of his previous writing. Significantly, it is in this book that Mr. Lubbock delivers the only *direct* adverse judgment he has ever pronounced. Speaking of Walter Berry, the man who most influenced Edith Wharton, he says that there was in him “the harshness of a dogmatist, the bleakness of an egoist, and the pretentiousness (I can’t help it) of a snob.” This plain astringency is something new to him. One feels the effort it has caused him to express it—the “I can’t help it” in its brackets—and accepts it as being perhaps the one thing needed to complete his mind in its full effective growth: a triumph over fear of being too definite and a quiet resolution to know just where one stands.

### III

There exists a growing tendency to-day to regard the “belles-lettrist” author as something of a fiddler, a writer without substance. This attitude, it would appear, is the product of two factors: the deepening seriousness of the times in which we live, which leads us to regard such authors as promoting a kind of Charm School in a vacuum; and the actual debasement of the “belles-lettrist” tradition by “week-end” essayists and other column-writers who have tried by various devices of style to hide their lack of thought and compulsion.

From these false literary kin of his, Mr. Lubbock must be nobly divorced. Master of a prose which is comely but not quaint, urbane but not artificial, exact without being severe, meaningful without oppression, precise in thought without resorting to the harshness of abstract phraseology, Mr. Lubbock has yet a further strength in store: a sounder grace of heart and mind than one learns to expect from this category of writing.

Public or official recognition of the arts yields a chancy indication of permanent merit. Honours have a way of flying around and alighting, to the eye of history, on wrong heads. Knighthoods and baronetcies have sometimes been granted without discrimination, prophetically speaking. The Order of Merit alone, perhaps, has a habit of reaching the rightful recipient. With Mr. Lubbock, this good precedent is strengthened. Distinction has been visited upon distinction.



## GEORGES ROUAULT

**D**URING THE SUMMER of 1952 the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris was given over to a retrospective exhibition of the works of Georges Rouault. This had previously been seen in Brussels and Amsterdam, and it is now on view in New York. We can only regret that the opportunity was not seized to present it in London. But the Absolute is not fashionable in Britain, and of all the incontestable masters of modern painting—there are not many—Rouault is here the least known and the least understood. It is significant that Roger Fry, who was not blind to his genius, treated him as a monk strayed from a medieval cloister and sorely in need of psycho-analysis. It is also significant, in another sense, that one of his finest pictures "The Mocking of Christ"—was rejected from the Dublin Municipal Gallery on the ground that it was unfit for exhibition in a Christian country. Happily, Dr. Kissane, the scholarly President of Maynooth, had different ideas; it now hangs in the vestibule of his Seminary.

The present exhibition is less complete than the one held in Zürich in 1948, but it bears comparison with that held in Boston, Washington and San Francisco during 1940. Curiously, there is no record of this in the catalogue. Furthermore, it enables us to appreciate the astonishing vitality of Rouault's later years. Indeed his whole development can be described in terms of repetition and renewal. There are virtuosity and experiment in plenty, but these are governed by a constant vision and a consistent aim. The accusation of society, of which the judge and the prostitute are symbols; the Christ victim and the Christ brother and, in one terrible picture not exhibited here, the Christ flaming in the wrath of the *Dies Irae*; the clown interpreted as scapegoat, bringing on to his little stage, like man himself, the memory of a better world; all these themes are repeated through Rouault's painting, so that any picture of a given period is similar to others painted about the same time. Each is the fruit of a similar obsession. But the undeviating progress of Rouault's art is admirably shown in the current exhibition. At the Musée d'Art Moderne the gouaches and water-colours executed in blues of a profound and mysterious intensity were all grouped together in the first room. Most of them are representations of pierrots or prostitutes, and they attest the discovery, not only of a vision but of a style. The earliest were painted in 1902. They were among the first symptoms of expressionism, in no clear descent from any near-contemporary models. There was a certain kinship with Daumier, Forain, and Toulouse-Lautrec; the same critical and social context. But what was caricature in Daumier or Lautrec had become monstrous in Rouault; a metaphysic of hell had intervened.



Rouault has always been a solitary, and he is still a recluse within the walls of his family circle. (He is married, with four children.) The drama of his spiritual development, which is not to be separated from the drama of his artistic evolution, can only be read in his painting and occasional writings. When the biography now in preparation by his friend the Abbé Morel eventually appears we shall doubtless know more—but not, perhaps, much more. However, we already know enough to realize the crucial importance of 1902. Rouault's master, Gustave Moreau, had died in 1898, and Rouault himself became curator of the museum (Moreau's studio) which the dead painter had given to the State. Rouault had already twice failed to obtain the Prix de Rome with Biblical paintings inspired by Moreau's style, and it was on Moreau's advice that he left the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts. But between 1898 and 1901 he exhibited fairly regularly at the Salon des Artistes Français. Here the Biblical or mythological inspiration of his pictures remained the same, but his personality was beginning to define itself through the traditional modes. What exactly caused him to break with these is uncertain. We only know that in 1901 he was a frequent visitor to the Benedictine Abbey of Ligugé, where he met Huysmans, and that in 1902 and 1903 he was obliged to take two prolonged health-cures in Haute-Savoie. Out of this solitude Rouault the painter was born.

In the second room of the Paris exhibition the judges begin to replace the prostitutes, and in contrast to them Rouault depicts the terrible poetry of the proletariat; and through his pity for the social outcast we catch, now for the first time, an echo of the Divine compassion. It is evident that these implacable and imbecile tribunals are the instruments of an atheist society. Rouault had much frequented the law-courts, and it was in 1904 that he made friends with Léon Bloy. His pictures of these years have all the force of Bloy's imprecations, but they have an artistic control which Bloy was never able to achieve. It was characteristic of Bloy's rather self-centred spirituality that he furiously rejected Rouault's method, and it speaks much for the painter's integrity and for the power of his inward vision that he was able to withstand the violence of his friend's reproaches. For the authority of Rouault's vision has always been equalled by his respect for the raw materials of painting; these were his daily taskmasters and they allowed him no escape into literature or abstraction. Already, as a young man, he had worked in stained-glass, and later, as an octogenarian, he would design the cartoons for the five windows of the church at Assy. At his first one-man show at the Galerie Druet in 1910 he exhibited forty-three ceramics and ten models in clay with eight drawings and 121 paintings in water-colour, gouache and oils. Several examples of Rouault's work in pottery and enamel were

included in the Paris exhibition, and a number of his designs for enamel are now being executed by the Benedictine studios at Ligugé.

For Rouault, as for Bernanos, the war of 1914-18 was a time of acute spiritual crisis. His mood had nothing in common with Bloy's hysterical chauvinism; it was quite untinged by hate. And the result was an astonishing series of engravings, "*Guerre et Miserere*," on which he worked for ten years. These were published in book form under the simple title *Miserere*, in 1948, and they compose the material of a film made recently under the direction of the Abbé Morel. Here is the stylization—the sublimation, if you will—of man made victim, and from this it was a natural step to attempt the direct imaging of Christ. Rouault turned his back on gouache and water-colour, and proceeded, by an almost incredible density of pigmentation, to give us a Christ who had walked in Galilee and who now moved in the shadow of the factory and among the debris of the *banlieu*. He would paint, principally, the Passion, and here there was a hieratic composition which recalled the school of Cimabue. But there is a sense in which Rouault, though he stands at the opposite pole from naturalism, is a profound realist. He could never have confined himself within the Byzantine or the Primitive formula. His Christ sweated with the agony of immediate experience—an experience more fearful than the deceptive *entr'acte* of 1920-39 allowed most of us to foresee. As surely as Picasso in "*Guernica*," Rouault captured the impending apocalypse.

With the Rouault of these *têtes de Christ* and "*Crucifixions*" Christian painting was reborn. Nothing so evangelical had been seen on canvas since El Greco and Tintoretto, and Rouault's art, like theirs, was personal; tense with interior struggle; beyond tradition, yet in no dogmatic opposition to it; quite impossible to imitate. If it was a *monologue*, as Marcel Arland has suggested, that only meant that it was rooted in contemplation; a contemplation of things as they are, not only as we should like them to be. Nor did this exclude the lesser faculties of observation; these were enlarged and deepened by theology. And Rouault's theology was the instinctive perception of any Christian workman who has learnt from his catechism and at his mother's knee the right ordering of things. What is precious has been his ability to preserve this normality through all the nightmares he has traversed. It is at some level, deeper than his conscious and perhaps unreasoning self, that he tempers judgment with mercy and distils from his image of sin or suffering a beauty satisfying to the eye and mind.

The loneliness and courage of Rouault may be measured by the fact that it was not until 1919 that one of his pictures was admitted into a museum (Colmar). Fame quickly followed. In 1921 Michel Puy

devoted a book to him; an important retrospective exhibition was held at the Galerie Druet in 1924; in 1929 he designed the *décor* for Diaghilev's production *Le Fils Prodigue*, with music by Prokofiev; and in the following year he had his first exhibitions in London, Munich, New York and Chicago. But even then the under-secretary of state for the Beaux Arts refused to buy any of his pictures for the Musée du Luxembourg although the Commission du Musée had asked for it. It was not until 1933 that room was made for one of his paintings, given by Mrs. Chester Dale, whose husband was one of the great American collectors. Even to-day a large percentage of Rouault's more important works are in Switzerland or the United States. I missed, in Paris, some of the things which had most moved me twelve years ago in Boston. Fortunately, however, "Le Vieux Roi"—which is one of the greatest pictures in the world—had been lent by the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh.

In 1913 Ambroise Vollard, the legendary art-dealer, bought up the whole of Rouault's unsold production. This amounted to about eight hundred canvases, of which many were unfinished. When Vollard died, his heirs refused to give them back. The matter was taken to the courts, and in 1947 judgment was given for Rouault. It was then found that 119 pictures (and they were among the best) had been disposed of in the meantime. Of those that were finally restored to him Rouault burned 315, which he did not think it worthwhile either to preserve or to complete. It is amusing to note that this heroic act of incendiarism took place on 5th November, 1948! By this time the ageing painter had once more renewed his style. At the Paris exhibition his later paintings, with their predominating greens, yellows and reds, were all grouped together in the last room; and one was reminded of the octogenarian Titian, suddenly surpassing himself by the discovery of an unsuspected secret. "La couleur," wrote Rouault many years ago, "est la fée qui ouvrit mes yeux avant la baptême." One thought he had done everything he could with it. But no; he had once more enriched his palette and enlarged his imaginative range. As Professor Venturi writes: "A new flight of creative freedom has allowed him to include all his past in his present. And this is how, in his most recent works, the octogenarian master has arrived at a perfect harmony between the plastic violence of his youth and the chromatic experience of his maturity."

Rouault's universe, if we leave aside the representations of Christ, can be illustrated by two works, of which only one, unfortunately, is shown in the present exhibition. The first is his tapestry of Satan—a bright, hard, cruel, military and quasi-Miltonic conception; and the second is his painting of Jeanne d'Arc. This is the Jeanne of Péguy and Bernanos, humble and heroic and seated wearily on her horse.

It is a gentle, pathetic picture, patriotic and personal at the same time; and it was Rouault's answer to the war of 1939 as the "Miserere" had been his answer to the war of 1914. Like Péguy himself, Rouault is rooted in the France of the cathedrals and the *chevalerie*; and his art, which so shocks the *bourgeois* sense of moderation, is related to the grotesque and hieratic shapes of Gothic sculpture. It detonates with the force of a *credo*.

ROBERT SPEAIGHT

## REVIEWS

### MR. BETJEMAN DESPAIRS

*First and Last Loves*, by John Betjeman (John Murray 18s).

IN THE SMALL, shrinking, perhaps vanishing society which honours beauty and humour, Mr. Betjeman is literally a household word. His name has passed into the vernacular as surely as Spooner and Banting. "A Betjeman character," "a Betjeman house," have plain meanings. His poems are the best remembered, the most quoted, of any writer's save Mr. Belloc. Are there circles where after-dinner revellers leap to their feet uninvited and declaim Mr. Stephen Spender's verses for the sheer delight of hearing them again? Perhaps. But the present writer suspects that such entertainments are rarer and vastly less exhilarating than the continuous, almost liturgical recitation of Mr. Betjeman's office.

"Betjemanism" is a mood of the moment like Existentialism. His following is among the gayest element of his contemporaries. Some make a good thing out of it, gleaning where he has so profusely sowed. Many hundreds of devotees enjoy a vicarious intimacy with the ladies to whom many of his finest poems were addressed. One of these charming muses has now come forward as the editress of his prose writings. Under the title *First and Last Loves*, Mrs. Piper, the immortal "Myfanwy," presents thirty-two pieces—there is no other word for them. She would have put us more deeply in her debt had she dated each and given the reference for its first publication. Thirteen pieces were admittedly composed for broadcasting. It seems probable that certain others have the same origin. The collection does not show Mr. Betjeman at the top of his form. He is, first and last, a poet—one of high technical ability—and prose does not become him. A poet writing prose often has something of the uneasiness of an actor asked to a party after his performance. There are traces of grease paint behind the ears; the manner is either too vivacious or betrays a studied normality. The broadcast pieces were popular and no doubt there are

many who will wish to be reminded of them. The present writer attempted to listen on several occasions and each time turned off the machine in embarrassment. Now, printed, they still bear the awful stains of their birth—the jauntiness, the intrusive, false intimacy, the sentimentality—which seem inseparable from this medium. Other essays are informative and satirical, designed for a graver audience. But many of Mr. Betjeman's disciples write this kind of thing as well as he. Connoisseurs will value this collection less as a work of art than as a conspectus of "Betjemanism."

Mr. Betjeman's principal themes are architectural, amorous (these essays have no example of this interest) and ecclesiastical. He celebrates the odd and the obscure. He is exclusively insular. A large part of his vogue springs from the recent embargo on foreign travel. Denied their traditional hunting grounds, aesthetes have had to make good with odds and ends at home. The normal process of Betjemanizing is first the undesired stop in a provincial English town, then the "discovery" there of a rather peculiar police station, *circa* 1880; the enquiry and identification of its architect. Further research reveals that a Methodist Chapel in another town is by the same hand. Then the hunt is up. More buildings are identified. The obscure name is uttered with reverence befitting Bernini. The senile master is found to be alive, in distressed circumstances in a northern suburb of London. He is a "character"; he has vague, personal memories of other long dead, equally revered contemporaries. In his last years he is either rejuvenated or else driven mad to find himself the object of pilgrimage. It is all very beguiling and beside it there flourishes a genuine, sound love of the simpler sorts of craftsmanship.

Mr. Betjeman's religious interests are everywhere apparent. Theology is totally closed to him, but he has sung hymns in every kind of protestant conventicle and acquired an *expertise* in Anglican deviations. Show him the hassocks in a country church and he will know unerringly whether the incumbent was educated at Cambridge or Durham; one glance at the lectern and he will tell you the hours of Sunday services. And the services are a deep source to him of excitement and sentiment. *First and Last Loves* has an instructive chapter on Nonconformist Architecture. It is regrettable that he omits from this category that vigorous Nonconformist body, the Catholic Church. One day perhaps he will turn his attention towards it. He will find English Catholic history of the last two centuries a territory rich in potential "discoveries."

There are several ingenious drawings by Mr. Piper in this book; other illustrations suffer from modern methods of reproduction. It would be a suitable Christmas book, nothing more, were it not for the inclusion of an introduction which is highly significant. "Love is dead"



Mr. Betjeman warns us. All that follows is the record of a game which the principal player is tired of. He has reached a conclusion which was predicted for him some years ago. In one of the editorial "Comments" in *Horizon*, Mr. Connolly imagined a benevolent dictator of England who would seek to clean the country of all its hideousness and leave only the old and the beautiful. Methodically his airmen set to work, but before the sound of their engines had died away the inhabitants had crept out of their burrows and were busy re-erecting all that was beastly. That is the point Mr. Betjeman has reached. No prospect pleases because man himself is vile. He is not troubled by the cosmic despair of George Orwell. He thinks it probable that the politicians and planners will succeed in their task. He thinks security is just round the corner. He looks about him and despairs. There is nothing to look forward to except mediocrity, forcibly imposed, infidelity and vulgarity. The game is up. He is not greatly concerned with the future. The present is hell.

Who can fail to sympathize? "Why was I born when I was?" An heroic past, an idyllic future—those are the alternatives, according to temperament, of the unhappy artist in any age. Never jam to-day. All the agonies and annoyances of growing up, which may last a lifetime, spring from the slow, necessary realization of the truth of the fall of Adam, and of the exiled condition of his progeny. Mr. Betjeman has kept himself going—and given great delight to others in the process—with a series of distractions. Now the game is up.

One must sympathize, but it would be becoming in Mr. Betjeman to show more penitence and less condemnation in his palinode. Who is to blame? If there were an *épuration* of those who had collaborated with the destroying forces, Mr. Betjeman's friends, the present writer among them, would compete for the privilege of rescuing and hiding him. But his name would be on the list of guilty men.

In January 1938 there was an architectural exhibition in London of all that Mr. Betjeman now deplures. The exhibitors called themselves the MARS group. Their catalogue had a preface by Bernard Shaw exulting over the destruction of Adelphi Terrace. The introduction hailed Le Corbusier as the liberator of architecture. And in the group beside Arup, Gropius, Chermayeff, Lubetkin and Zweigenthal stands the name of Mr. Betjeman.

He rants against State control, but he is a member of the Church of England. In the face of that prodigious State usurpation laments about the colour of nationalized railway engines lose their poignancy.

He denounces suburban mediocrity, while he himself has been the leader and sole instigator of the fashionable flight from Greatness, away from the traditional hierarchy of classic genius, away from the library to the threepenny-box of the second-hand bookseller, away from the



Mediterranean to the Isle of Man, away from the Universal Church into odd sects and schisms, away from historic palaces into odd corners of Aberdeen. All very diverting but the record-rate is not enough, and it is not for Mr. Betjeman to scold anyone but himself when he discovers it. He has been trying to subsist on a very low, though spicy, diet, and is wilting with malnutrition.

EVELYN WAUGH

### A TIMELESS VISION

*The Alchemists*, by F. Sherwood Taylor (Heinemann 12s 6d).

THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING abroad to-day that, without sacrificing the enormous advances in specialization that separate us from the medievals, we must somehow recapture the wholeness of vision which the medievals cherished and which we have lost. Obviously, if this is to be achieved, we must first discover how far the medieval vision is detachable from the dust of their exploded theories and methods. Few books in this regard could be more timely than Dr. Sherwood Taylor's study of *The Alchemists*; and no one but Dr. Sherwood Taylor could have written it so well. An eminent scientist himself, as well as a profound student of medieval philosophy, he tempers his analytical accuracy and historical lore with a friendly intuitive sympathy both for the more humorous aspects of alchemy and for its genuine merits and successes.

Who would have dreamed that chemistry of all things could have an intrinsic inspiration like poetry and religion? Yet to the ancients and to the medievals, chemistry shorn of this inspiration was unthinkable. It was an inspiration that might wither into superstitious ritual. But essentially it remained an unspoiled awareness that the universe was alive with God's creative breath, and that in this energizing breath there was an intelligible design which unfolded as one worked. The design was for the perfecting of nature on all its levels. To reproduce the design there had to be patient toil and experiment on one level, encouragement by analogy with other levels, and continual refreshment from an inward vision of the whole. The vision which the worthy alchemists cherished in their humble sphere was the same as that of the greatest poets and philosophers, the architects and the statesmen.

It is possible that among those who may profit from this book are not only modern scientists but modern scholastic philosophers. Alchemy to a large extent provides the imagery that accompanies the abstract concepts of scholastic philosophy. It is a post-Cartesian error that supposes the great scholastic philosophers to have despised imagery

or tried to do without it. On the contrary, the greatest of them held that all thought was distilled from imagery, and should therefore preserve the best of that from which it came. It is not much use for modern students to amass the *formulae* of scholasticism if they have never felt its living breath.

Meanwhile, for the average reader here is a fascinating story, with discoveries in plenty. It may not often be given to the average reader to savour the bouquet of a really fine liqueur; but if and when it is, let him remember the alchemists who aimed at the perfection of nature on all its levels.

CHRISTOPHER DEVLIN

#### FR. BEDE JARRETT

*Bede Jarrett, O.P.*, by K. Wykeham-George and Gervase Mathew, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications 12s 6d).

WE REJOICE that the long-expected Life of Fr. Bede Jarrett has appeared, even if we are surprised by its brevity. He was brought up in spacious surroundings, which may have helped him to retain that broad-mindedness which was always his and for which he was even sometimes criticized. He was born in 1881, went to school at Stonyhurst, and was meant, like his four brothers, his father and his uncle, for the army. But his Dominican vocation seems to have been born with him and was neither encouraged nor opposed. During his noviciate retreat he chose the French "Life" of Lacordaire and the book on the principles of religious life by Fr. Reginald Buckler. There were here two "tendencies"—an emphasis on the contemporary apostolate, and fidelity to unbroken tradition; and in the noviciate itself, at Woodchester, the Prior is said to have represented the older, quiet life of the Province; the novice-master, Fr. Antoninus Williams, dreams of national expansion. These tendencies were to be in great measure harmonized by Fr. Bede himself. We cannot doubt that the creative impulse was much strengthened by the remarkable personality of Mother Margaret Hallahan who began in 1844 to organize the Third Order Dominicanesses in the Midlands, guided by Ullathorne. Fr. Bede was to co-ordinate their various houses: Fr. Bertrand Wilberforce stimulated the missionary activity of the Dominicans, and their studies were reorganized at the new foundation of Hawkesyard. Meanwhile the influence of Fr. Vincent McNabb was steadily moulding him especially in the direction of Thomism, of exact scholarship and social study, widened, perhaps, by the influence of Fr. Hugh Pope, especially in the direction of scripture study; probably it was from

him that Fr. Bede derived his intense admiration for that great and courageous scholar, Fr. Lagrange. Yet he had his hours of disheartenment. Twice, we learn, he was on the point of leaving the Dominicans. However, he became absorbed by the idea of going to Oxford for History, and in fact matriculated there in October, 1904, being ordained in December of that year. It would be idle to catalogue all the men who influenced him at Oxford: he retained his freedom of mind and could criticize both them and Hawkesyard, while recognizing with extreme generosity the sincerity of those with whom he disagreed, as a most grateful letter to him from Mr. Coulton witnesses. He took a brilliant First in History, and then went to Louvain to complete his theological studies, accomplishing a two years' course in one. A professorial destiny seemed marked out for him, and he had planned many books. But in 1908 he was appointed assistant priest at Haverstock Hill. "If his Thomist emphasis on the Providence of God led him close to fatalism, he never became fatalist." He threw himself into unexpected tasks—like being chaplain to Scouts; he learned to cook, to read codes, to take an interest in boxing, to tell ghost stories. He also studied Socialism very deeply, and did much preaching (sing, he could not!). He became Prior of London in 1914, and, after two years, Prior Provincial, aged only thirty-five.

A problem that beset him, as it does the superiors of all religious Orders that must lead their special life, and maintain schools, and also do parochial work, was how to preserve a proper balance between these activities. Chapter VII shows how he addressed himself to this problem, to which, in England at any rate, no hundred-per-cent solution is to be found. And the next chapter is devoted to those "Missions beyond England" which he with his Dominican tradition could not possibly neglect. The Grenada mission in the West Indies had been a Dominican one since 1901; but his mind turned naturally towards India itself. We have to sympathize with his failure to establish anything permanent there, or again in Persia, though it is sad that his hopes for a study of Christian philosophy and mystical experience in relation to the Orient were never realized and seem less likely, now than ever, to come about. He did, however, have greater success in South Africa, though his dreams were far from being fulfilled. He was clear that South African recruits must be enrolled, and that Dominican work must centre in the cities and the universities: and it is all too evident what he would have felt about the Apartheid system and the frightful consequences that are bound to come from it. In Wales he was unsuccessful; America bewildered him though he several times went there and made many friends there: he felt, but never *was*, frustrated: Blackfriars in Oxford was, maybe, his most solid creation—here the Liturgy was fully accessible; here study could

be intense; hence lecturers, preachers and writing issued generously forth. Hither, at the end of his fourth consecutive provincialate, he came as Prior. But from Chapter XII to the end the book seems to become more personal: his letters on friendship are wonderfully fresh and encouraging, and very balanced. He wrote many postcards, but it is amazing how many long, vivid and humane letters he found time for. We wish that a collection of these could be published, and a selection, at least, of his books now out of print. Among those that should endure is certainly his *No Abiding City*. In the spiritual life so many words are almost interchangeable, or, at least, in their full meaning, imply one another. Thus, Fr. Bede's "faith" was so at once a thing of hope issuing into—and yet inspired by—love that it could almost be called a "loving certainty." He was intimately sure of God's initiative operating in all things, which could mean nothing else but perfect knowledge, wisdom, love. Had you asked him: "What then of Sin? even, of Hell?" I do not know that he would have had a readier answer than Dame Julian of Norwich's, that all should be well, or indeed than St. Paul's, that for them that love Him, God *makes* all things to work together for good. And, should you have urged: "What of those who do *not* love Him?" I wish to impute no facile universalism to him if I think he might have answered that perhaps, somehow or other, without knowing it, they *do*.

We trust that this book is but a prelude. The South African episode deserves a volume to itself. This is a black-and-white sketch; I would ask for more colour. He died on March 17, 1934, aged fifty-two.

C. C. MARTINDALE

### EDUCATIONAL SURVEY

*The Year Book of Education* 1951 (Evans Brothers, Ltd. 63s).

SINCE ITS FOUNDATION by Sir Robert Evans, *The Year Book of Education*, under the direction of a strong Editorial Board, has provided a number of massive studies, chiefly concerned with the relation of education to other aspects of human activity, economic, cultural or social. The theme of the 1951 edition is "Education and Morals," and the forty chapters by experts from all over the world, grouped in this large volume of almost 700 pages, provide a wealth of material, much information, a great deal of which is not concerned with morals at all, and, to the Catholic reader, not a little food for thought.

The range of studies is wide even if the sequence is not always coherent. There are, for example, remarkable chapters summarizing the religious and moral philosophies of the East: Hinduism, Buddhism,

Confucianism, and a most ingeniously partisan contribution by a Slovene professor, entitled "The Moral Philosophy of Communism." The tangle his Marxist preoccupations have got him into may be judged from the following:—

The history of ethical or moral theories has made famous the Jesuit motto: "Omnia ad maiorem Dei gloriam," "All things to the greater glory of God," which the Spanish Jesuit Escobar y Mendoza expressed more simply in the seventeenth century in the axiom: "The end justified the means." This axiom has become the basis of what is known as clerical moral philosophy.

A section entitled "The English-speaking World," including discussions of various aspects of moral training, has a disappointing paper by Dr. Basil Yeaxlee, which is more concerned with the history of the effort to force undenominational Christianity on English education than with the moral training which such a system might be thought to sustain. There is a useful, if somewhat surprising chapter, entitled "The Scottish Solution," of which the first part is an excellent summary of Scottish educational history and a commentary on the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918.

Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, in a chapter on "The Republic of Ireland," sums up in a masterly fashion the responsibilities of family, Church and State, and he makes a valuable comment on the respect for conscience and practical toleration contained in Article 42 of the Constitution of Ireland (1937).

It follows that, as regards formative education, no church, *qua* Church, has any constitutional status, and also, in so far as the Catholic Church as an organization for implementing parental rights, has a constitutional status in education, every other religious denomination has an equal status. Looked at from the inside, as regards ourselves who admit its supernatural authority, the Catholic Church is much more than a natural association of parents. But as regards the Constitution of this state, we have, though numerically preponderant, the same status as the Church of Ireland or the Jews. Each of these bodies is recognized educationally only as it represents the parents who agree to send their children to the respective schools.

This pluralistic outlook does not mean that the state is indifferent to religion; on the contrary, religion is regarded as an essential constituent of education. It is nowadays increasingly recognized that there is a minimal social creed necessary for the continued survival of any community. But beyond this the Irish State makes no religious demand on its citizens, it guarantees the religious conscience immunity from all coercive pressures exerted by any



agency of government. It does not deny or even doubt religious authority; it simply refuses itself to act as such; it holds that its ends will be best effected by ensuring the legal equality of all religious associations.

M. Joseph Vialatoux and Professor André Latreille write on Christianity and Secularism in France, and M. Rene Hubert of Strasbourg explains the school system in Alsace. These and the other chapters dealing with the situation in Europe are concerned with the administrative framework, the rights of associations, the powers of the state and, in general, the influence of the agents in education rather than with the content of the moral teaching which is provided for the pupils and students. In this respect the chapters on Asia and Africa seem to keep in mind more steadily the general purpose of the Editorial Board.

Even non-Catholic readers will be impressed by the persuasive and cogent presentation of the Catholic conception of man and his purpose which Father Martin D'Arcy has provided in the chapter entitled "Roman Catholicism." In a brilliant paragraph he shows that a proper appreciation of the connection between education and morals depends on an understanding of man, his nature and his purpose. The notion of purpose in morals introduces the concept of natural law and of conscience. Father D'Arcy, however, does not remain on the natural plane. He is one of the very few contributors who discusses the notion of sin, and is unique in distinguishing Original Sin and personal sins. This allows him to explain not only man's supernatural destiny but also the means which God has provided in the Church to enable him to attain it.

The Catholic accepts a moral code because his mind recognizes its truth, and at the same time he is sure in his mind that morality depends on God and that God has favoured man in a special way by the gift of the supernatural life through Christ. He ought to prove his faith by example, by the perfect performance of his duties, and by his interest in all that promotes the common welfare. He has a new dynamic motive for so acting; he has as a vivid model for imitation God-made man, and he possesses that "happiness within the heart," of which Dante wrote, in his belief that God is the master of fate, that no good thought or deed passes into the vacuum of the past, and that justice and truth will be vindicated.

Two points remain for comment. It is heartening to see in the midst of so much divergency an insistence on the educational function of the family and the emphasis that the root of many of our moral problems lies in the great social canker of to-day, the disintegration of

family life. Secondly, the whole book underlines the wide divergency of view as to what, in the concrete, moral training should seek to achieve. It is in fact a long academic gloss on the note which appeared at the head of the famous seventh chapter on "The Moral Factor" which appeared in the Central Advisory Council for Education's pamphlet entitled *School and Life*:

This chapter contains the Council's attempt to deal with an aspect of our main subject which most of us regard as vital to it, but on which there is a wide divergence of conviction. As the attempt proceeded we realized that the divergence coloured both our interpretation of history and our estimate of the present situation. The result, therefore, does not fully satisfy any member of the Council.

G. A. BECK

### SPIRITUAL CLASSICS

*The Ascent of Mount Sion*, by Bernardino de Laredo. Translated with introduction and notes by E. Allison Peers (Faber 21s).

*The Spiritual Espousals*, by Blessed Jan van Ruysbroek. Translated, with introduction, by E. Colledge (Faber 18s).

*The Goad of Love*, by Walter Hilton. An unpublished translation, edited by Clare Kirchberger from manuscript sources (Faber 18s).

EXACTLY IN PROPORTION as a serious interest is being once more taken by Catholics in mysticism, it is important that the genuine classics of the contemplative life should be accessible; and it is of a library of these that Professor Allison Peers is General Editor. Most readers will at least know of St. John of the Cross's *Ascent of Mount Carmel*; but few have even heard of Laredo's book, though it was the great discovery made by St. Teresa about 1556 when she was really thinking that maybe, after twenty years' effort, she had better give up prayer altogether, impossible as it would have been. She found this book (strictly, the third part of the *Ascent* which alone is here translated) and a Jesuit (seemingly anonymous) encouraged her on no account to give up prayer. Laredo was a doctor who became a Franciscan lay-brother and continued to serve as apothecary and wrote two books on Medicine, but clearly saw that doctor and priest must co-operate in the healing of the human complex, as we might say. He led up to the prayer of quiet, but his originality is not in his doctrine or even style, which is often prolix and involved, but in the charm of his personality and *naïveté*—we are to recognize God in *all*—in an ant, a lentil, a pole, a brick, and he expatiates on the brick! It is certain that Teresa drew much of her inspiration (and possibly her diction—at

first she could not differentiate between mind and soul and spirit) from Laredo.

Mr. Colledge's book is of the highest value, not only because of its main contents, but because it ought to free the long-maligned Ruysbroek from imputations of Pantheism or even Quietism. We agree at once that *no* supernatural mystery (in this case, the ultimate union of the soul with God) can be adequately stated in merely human terms. "Self-annihilation" is one example: that the soul is to be "absorbed into God," "lost in God," are others. So are St. Paul's: "I live, no more I, but Christ is living in me," combined with his constant assertion that he is "in Christ." The wave of mysticism that swept not least over Flanders in the thirteenth century tossed many a mind overboard: this book helps us to find a pilot in Blessed Jan Ruysbroek.

*The Goad of Love* was once attributed to St. Bonaventura. The exact part played by Walter Hilton in this translation of a compilation is for scholarship to decide: and this is provided by the Introduction, which is quite admirable. Can anything more delicate be imagined than the disentangling of the "sobriety" and the "tenderness" in a fourteenth-century English writer? What Hilton omits, and what he adds! Perhaps unjustifiably, still my mind is sent back to the heartfelt intellectuality of St. Anselm! If there is still a tension between our superlative duty of meditating the Humanity of Christ and transcending even that, it may be because the doctrine of His mystical body was still undeveloped, with its consequence that however close we come to God, we must still be *in Christo*; and, in Him, Divinity and Humanity are for ever married. This is a beautiful book, and we thank God for the immense labour that lies behind its production. Here is nothing slovenly or second-hand.

#### · CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Abercrombie, reviewing the volume of Lord Acton's *Essays on Church and State*, says "the only clue to any principle of selection" is a sentence about Acton's relevance to the present day. His otherwise acute eye has apparently missed in the first paragraph of the Introduction, the explanation that this volume assembles the chief early writings omitted—and only writings omitted—from the volumes collected by Messrs. Figgis and Laurence some forty years ago. The point of this volume is to supplement them. *Conflicts with Rome*, which he mentions as a desideratum, he will find in *The History of Freedom and other Essays*.

Yours faithfully,

DOUGLAS WOODRUFF

16th October, 1952.

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